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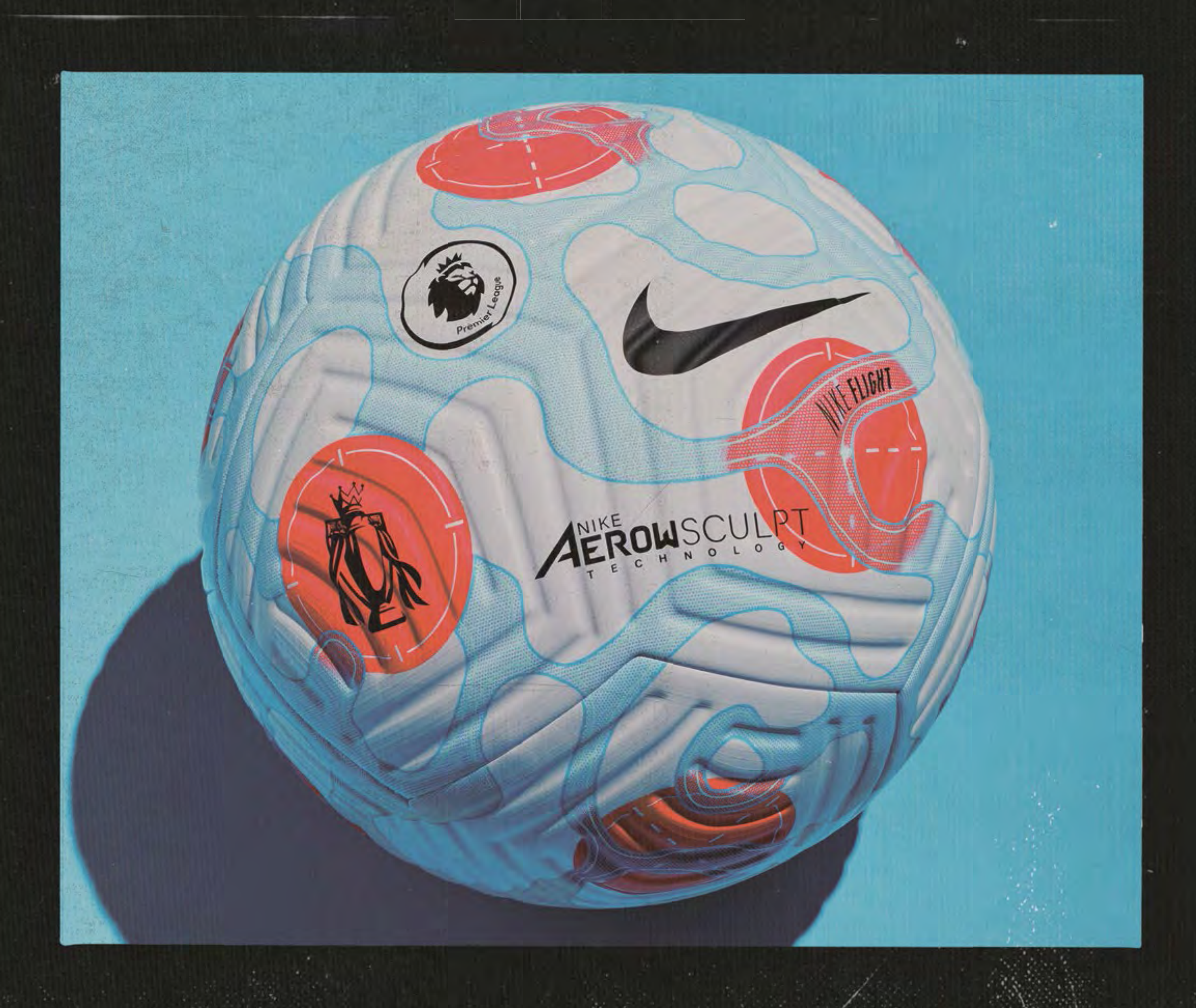
KLOPP'S CUP

HOW JÜRGEN'S MIGHTY REDS STRUCK SILVER AT WEMBLEY

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MEET THE NEW NIKE FLIGHT BALL





"IN COMES KLOPP WITH A CLOTHESLINE ON THE BIG DUTCHMAN" – WWE WRESTLING ANFIELD-STYLE

CORNER TAKEN QUICKLY



Just like Barcelona in 2019, the page where you don't know what to expect...

5 EARTHY REDS

Chris KirkLAND
Paul KoncheSKY
Mark SEAgraves
David F-AIRclough
Nathaniel P-HILLips

OUR LADS HAVE COME FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE

Luis Diaz (Barrancas, Colombia)

Situated in northern Colombia on the Guajira Peninsula, Barrancas is a lot warmer than northern England. It is located in the Caribbean Region of Colombia where the average temperature is 28 degrees and a cold day would be called 'summer' in the UK.

Barrancas has a population of around 38,000, meaning the whole town is about as big as Salisbury and could fit inside Elland Road, although it seems unlikely they'd all want to.

In 1892, when Liverpool FC was being formed, Barrancas became a municipality and its economy is now largely based around agriculture and the nearby Carrejoon coal mine – the tenth-biggest open-pit coal mine in the world.

Every October, Barrancas celebrates the Festival y Reinado Nacional del Carbon – a festival of coal, although thanks to Luis Diaz, Kopites are more likely to celebrate a festival of goals.

The festival also shows off the arts and crafts of the Wayuu, an indigenous ethnic group of people that Luis grew up as part of. The Wayuu culture is known for making mochilas – handcrafted, colourful crocheted bags that are Colombia's most exported handicraft, but in Liverpool's no23 they've also exported an amazing footballer.

ROBBIE FOWLER NAMES WORST-DRESSED EX-RED...

"Bjorn Tore Kvarme was ABBA-esque. We're talking in the 1990s, but he used to dress like ABBA in the 1970s."

BLAGGING IT

One of these advert-related facts is true, the others are made up. Take a break and have a guess...

Ian Rush appeared in an advert for milk in 1989.

Kevin Keegan appeared in an advert for Sugar Puffs in 1996.

James Milner appeared in an advert for Yorkshire Tea in 2019.

Answer: Kevin Keegan appeared alongside the Honey Monster for a Sugar Puffs commercial when he was Newcastle manager, the 'Honey Monster' heading home a late winner. Ian Rush never actually appeared in the famous "Accrington Stanley, who are they?" ad in the 1980s but was mentioned, and while James Milner often features Yorkshire Tea on his social media, he has never been in an advert for it. Although if they want to contact his agent...

RANDOM CHANT OF THE MONTH

Forza Liverpool allez allez,
Forza Liverpool allez allez,
Forza Liverpool, Forza Liverpool,
Forza Liverpool allez allez!

Top 10 LFC Assists since 1970/71

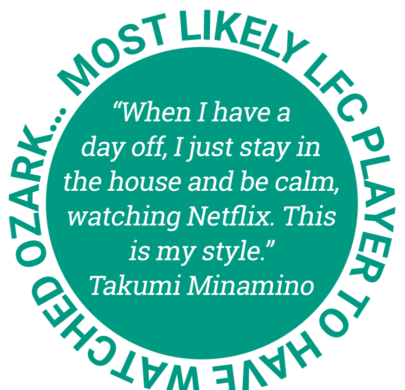
1	Kenny Dalglish	165
2	Steven Gerrard	145
3	John Barnes	101
4	Steve McManaman	85
5	Ian Rush	84
6	Kevin Keegan	72
7	Steve Heighway	66
8	Roberto Firmino	66
9	Trent Alexander-Arnold	59
10	Terry McDermott	57

(stats from lfchistory.net, correct after Inter Milan (h))



WHEN YOU SEE YOUR MATE FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE LOCKDOWN

MOST LIKELY LFC PLAYER TO HAVE WATCHED OZARK...



"When I have a day off, I just stay in the house and be calm, watching Netflix. This is my style."
Takumi Minamino

WEMBLEY

The best pictures from the 2022 Carabao Cup final which saw Liverpool triumph over Chelsea in a penalty shoot-out after 120 pulsating minutes of action



WONDERS



120 MINUTES THAT HAD EVERYTHING...BUT GOALS

How good was it to see those familiar flags at Wembley – in a packed, raucous, red end, for the Carabao Cup final? How sad was it, though, to see Thiago in tears before kick-off, having injured himself in the warm-up? The midfielder was replaced by Naby Keita in the starting eleven with Harvey Elliott called up to Liverpool's substitutes bench. So this was the team: Caiomhin Kelleher in goal, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Joel Matip, Virgil van Dijk and Andy Robertson at the back; Fabinho, Jordan Henderson and Keita in midfield; Mo Salah, Luis Diaz and Sadio Mane up front.

From the first whistle, the Reds and Chelsea went toe-to-toe, neither backing down, both having periods of dominance and gilt-edged chances. It would finish nil-nil after 120 minutes – arguably the most entertaining goalless draw in cup final history at this venue.

On six minutes the Londoners carved open the first clear opportunity, Azpilicueta's low cross hit first-time by Pulisic only for Kelleher to produce a fine save with his left hand.

Liverpool grew stronger and Diaz saw more and more of the ball, linking up well with Robertson and raiding down Chelsea's right-flank. It was only his sixth appearance but already he looks like a real Liverpool player, always alert, always running, always involved.

On the half-hour mark it was Mane, however, who almost put the Reds ahead. First he laid the ball back to Keita, whose low shot was parried by Chelsea keeper Edouard Mendy into his international team-mate's path, six yards out. One-nil, surely.



Incredibly, Mendy deflected Mane's drive over the bar at point-blank range.

Kai Havertz and Mason Mount then went close for Chelsea, both dragging their efforts wide and both deemed offside.

After the interval Liverpool were attacking their own fans but it was Chelsea who almost scored again, Mount finding himself one-on-one with Kelleher but striking the upright before the ball rolled across the face of goal.

On 65 minutes there was another big chance for the Reds. Mane slid the ball into the run of Salah who advanced on goal and dinked over Mendy. As it bounced towards the open goal, just possibly going wide, Thiago Silva made sure with a clearance more or less off the line.

Then came the 'goal' we thought had won it. Trent's lovely free-kick into a crowded penalty area was headed down and back across goal by Mane and Matip surged forward to head the ball into the roof of the net. The Liverpool end erupted, the Liverpool players leapt with joy…and the decision was referred to VAR. After consulting the pitchside monitor, referee Stuart Attwell disallowed the goal after adjudging Van Dijk to have blocked Chelsea defender Reece James in an offside position.

In the last quarter-of-an-hour of normal time, both sides had more opportunities to break the deadlock. Diaz had a near-post shot saved, then he and Matip were both involved in a frantic



goalmouth scramble which Chelsea eventually cleared. Havertz headed into the net but was flagged offside. Van Dijk's header from an Alexander-Arnold corner was well saved, before a superb left-footed reaction-stop from Kelleher denied Romelu Lukaku.

What a game the 23-year-old Irish goalkeeper was having. The calmest man in the 85,512-person arena, making his first appearance in a major cup final.

Final whistle…and breathe….for now.

Ten minutes earlier the Reds had made a triple-change: James Milner replacing skipper Henderson and taking the captain's armband; Elliott and Diogo Jota on for Keita and Mane. And just ahead of extra-time, Ibrahim Konate replaced Matip.

Chelsea had two more goals disallowed for offside before their manager Thomas Tuchel made a big call: with the shoot-out looming, he replaced Mendy with substitute keeper Kepa Arrizabalaga, renowned for his penalty heroics.

The stats over the course of the 120 minutes of action: 55 per cent possession for Liverpool, 45 for Chelsea. Twenty shots for Liverpool with six on target, eleven and four for Chelsea. Eleven corners for the Reds, two for the Blues.





DON'T LOOK NOW…IT'S PENS

For the fifth time in Liverpool's last six League Cup finals, it had gone to extra-time; and for the fourth time, penalties. Previously the Reds had won a spot-kick shoot-out against Birmingham City in 2001 and Cardiff City in 2012, but lost this way to Manchester City in 2016. Time for the nerves to be thoroughly wracked once more.

Milner won the toss for ends, meaning the shoot-out would take place in front of the Liverpool supporters. He stepped up to take the first kick and send Arrizabalaga the wrong way before Marcos Alonso fired to his right and scored despite Kelleher guessing the direction.

Fabinho was next, scoring with a 'Panenka' over the keeper, before Lukaku equalised with Kelleher diving the wrong way.

Van Dijk made it 3-2, his left-sided shot too powerful for Arrizabalaga. Then Havertz stopped in his run-up before going to his right. Three-all.

Trent scored with a good penalty to his left despite Arrizabalaga guessing the correct way. Fellow right-back James did the same. Mo made it 5-4, slotting home to his right. Jorginho made it 5-5, side-footing as Kelleher guessed wrong.

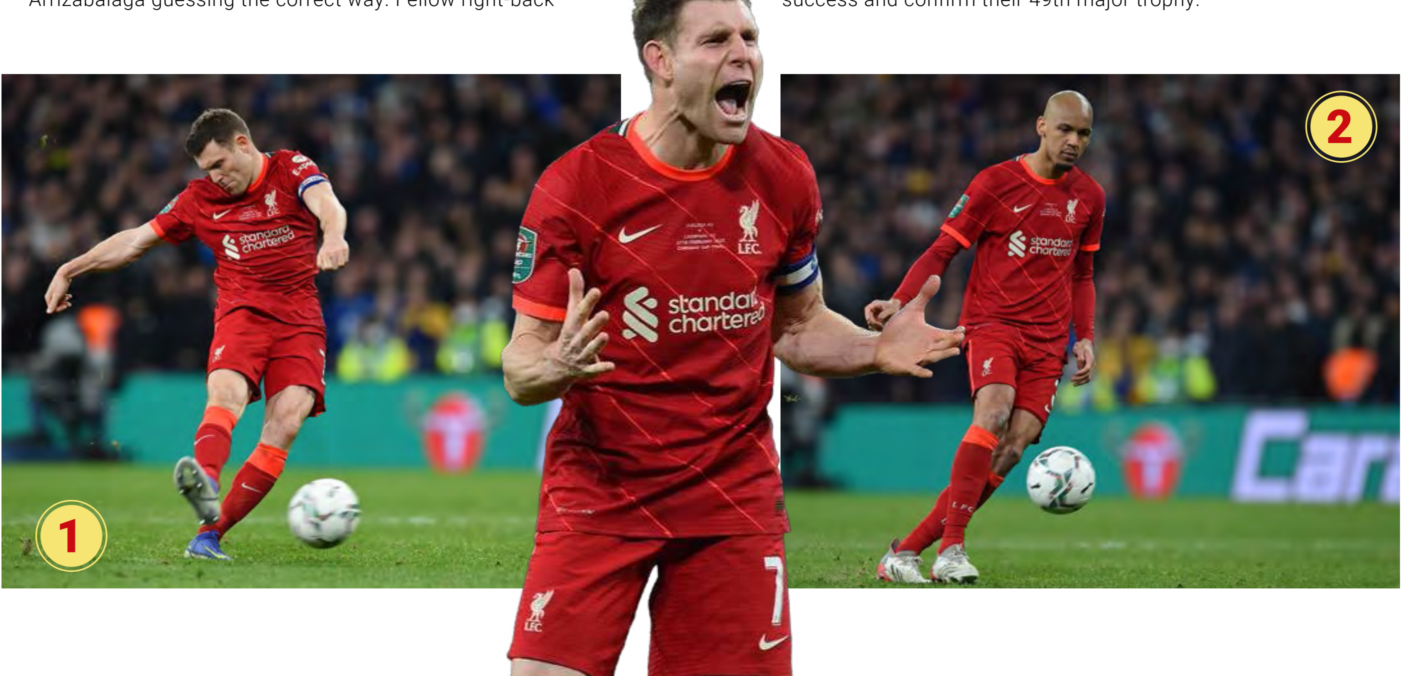
Sudden-death now. Jota went down down the middle to score. Antonio Rudiger hit his effort just to the right of the middle. Divock Origi went central too, before N'Golo Kante found the net to his left. Seven-each, absolutely no let-up, many barely able to watch.

Robertson sent Arrizabalaga the wrong way to make it 8-7. Werner levelled it up again at 8-8 as he fired home to his left.

Then Elliott and Thiago Silva both shot to their left. Konate's effort was just strong enough to beat the keeper's hand, but Trevoh Chalobah made it 10-10.

The goalkeepers were up next, and Keller showed why he played as a striker in his younger days as he drove home confidently, sending his opposite number the wrong way.

And so Arrizabalaga stepped up, spotted the ball…and skied his shot high over the bar to give the Reds an 11-10 shoot-out success and confirm their 49th major trophy.




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NERGY DRINK
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"THAT'S THE THING WITH FOOTBALL... YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT'S AROUND THE CORNER"

Dua Lipa's hit *One Kiss* rang out over the Wembley PA as the Liverpool players celebrated jubilantly in front of their fans and Jordan Henderson performed his fifth trophy-lift as captain and dedicated the Carabao Cup win to every single Reds player involved in the tournament this season.

He told Sky Sports post-match: "We've used all the squad from the start of the competition – the first team and Academy have all chipped in. It's very special to win trophies for this football club, no matter what the competition.

"It was a great opportunity for us and thankfully we're on the right side of it. It's always difficult when it goes to penalties, it's never nice, but I thought the lads overall deserved to win."

He continued: "I never take for granted playing for this football club [and] to be winning trophies is extra special. The fans deserve it, the players deserve it.

"It was a fantastic day and hopefully this can give us a little kickstart for the last few months of the season because there's a lot of football to be played."

Spot-kick hero Caoimhin Kelleher revealed: "I was dreaming good things last night, that we would win, but never in my wildest dreams would I have thought I'd score a penalty at the Liverpool end, the winning penalty – that's just next level.

"He [Alisson] is brilliant. You saw Chelsea change their goalkeeper at the end as well, so for me to get the faith from the manager was special and Ali has just been great with me."




Carabao Cup
EFL




DIOGO J.
20


Salah
Adrian
Henderson
Oxlade-Chamberlain
Minamino
Diogo J.
Tsimikas



Fabinho, meanwhile, explained his own audacious penalty-kick: "The day before, I tried to do a 'Panenka' [in training], but it was just me and Luis Diaz without a goalkeeper in the goal. I tried to shoot like this and I told him, 'Tomorrow if we go to pens, I will shoot like this'. He didn't believe me, but when I was walking to the ball to take that penalty it was in my mind that I would shoot a 'Panenka'. It worked!

"When you shoot a penalty like this, you have to know if you miss maybe you can't go into the dressing room because everyone will kill you! But in my mind, I was like: I will take it like this."

Defender Virgil van Dijk called all the Liverpool penalties "outstanding" and added: "Under full pressure everyone did well – we practised them quite a bit.

"At Liverpool we are all a family and we do things together. The atmosphere today was outstanding and we're all very happy. Credit to all the players who have been involved, from the youngsters who started the competition to the players who haven't played as much of the league campaign – so everyone has been a part of this.

"I'm very happy for Caoimhin. It will give him a boost of confidence and it will make him more mature to play the way he played at this level."

Fellow centre-back Ibrahima Konate described the occasion as "an unreal, unbelievable weekend. My first title in professional


Adrian
Henderson
Oxlade-
Chamberlain
Minamino
Diogo J.
Tsimikas
ADRIAN
13
standard
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Carabao ENERGY DRINK
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB
EST 1892
ARE LIVERPOOL
EVER WALK AL



football and with Liverpool – I don't really have the words to describe it, but I hope I will have a lot of moments like that with the club."

For Harvey Elliott, who'd been through so much following his early-season injury and was not expected to take part on the day, the emotions were running "very high. It all happened so quick, to be honest. But that's the thing with football, you never know what's going to come around the corner.

"You always need to be well-prepared and if you're called upon, you need to have the right mentality, the right focus to go on. It was a crazy day, but to come away with the win is the most important thing.

"With the fans as well, we enjoyed it a bit more because it was our first trophy in a while, since having fans back. We celebrated a lot, which we deserved to do, but as soon as we got on that coach and on the plane home, the focus was on the next match."

For the record, the win at Wembley delivered Liverpool's ninth triumph in the competition – now one more than Manchester City. The Reds won their 49th major honour and stretched their advantage as English football's most successful club, ahead of Manchester United (45).

Another update to the 'Champions Wall' was required.



ONE KISS... AND A



MILLION SMILES

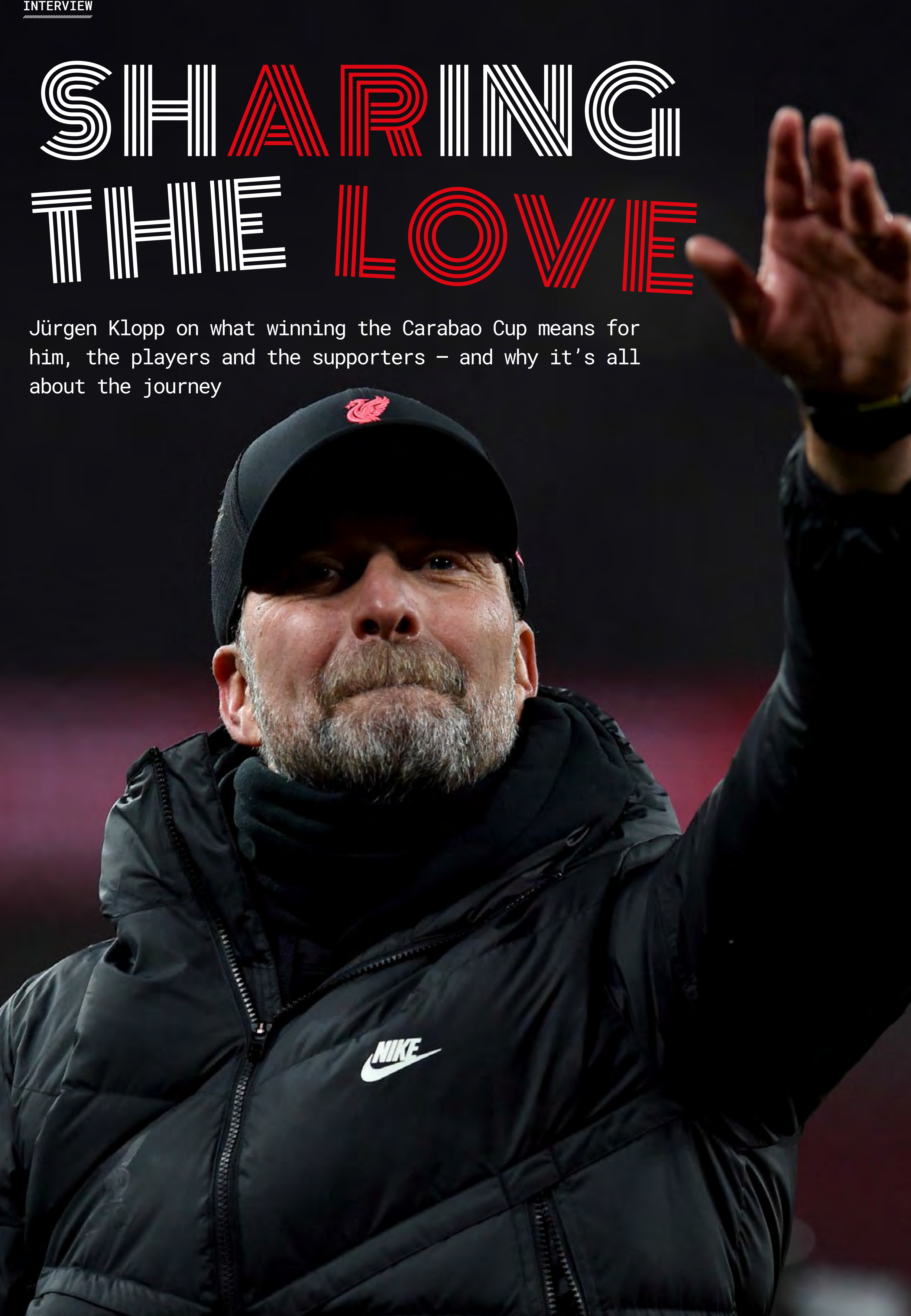





WHEN THE NIGHT IS CLOU
THERE IS STILL A LIGHT THAT SHINES
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H PEAK REDS
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LIVERPOOL
LIVERPOOL
LEAGUE CUP
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standard chartered
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SHARING THE LOVE

Jürgen Klopp on what winning the Carabao Cup means for him, the players and the supporters – and why it's all about the journey



HOW DO YOU REFLECT ON THE CARABAO CUP FINAL VICTORY AGAINST CHELSEA AT WEMBLEY?

It was like two lions going for each other. It was absolutely crazy! They started better, we took over and were then better. I'm not sure 100 per cent, but the first half was like 63 per cent possession for us – against Chelsea that's not that easy, so obviously there was a lot of good football stuff.

The second half started again with two really good moments for Chelsea, we sorted it again but over 120 minutes you cannot hold them back and away from your goal, so they had their chances.

Obviously they scored more 'goals' than us but they all were offside. That's pretty harsh to take for them, I can imagine, but we had the goal of Joel Matip disallowed and that was a tricky one to understand at the time.

Then the penalty shoot-out, one of the most spectacular I ever saw. It was absolutely great to win it like this.

I'm really happy about the effort and yes, it's a big one for us because it's the first time for this group but the ninth time for the club, which is very important as well.

YOU USED 33 PLAYERS IN THE COMPETITION ACROSS THE SIX GAMES, ESSENTIALLY THREE WHOLE TEAMS…

The whole journey was absolutely outstanding. We had Adrian saving us at Preston and then we scored the two goals. Without Takumi [Minamino] and without Divock [Origi] and the goals they scored in the competition, we would not have been in the final.

I have to be careful that I don't forget anybody, but we had Tyler Morton, who was not with us in the hotel before the final because he was slightly injured. Then there was Conor [Bradley], Owen [Beck], Harvey [Blair] from the U18s, Elijah [Dixon-Bonner] played some minutes as well.

When we were 3-1 down against Leicester, I think most people wrote us off in that moment, but we came back and won it in a penalty shoot-out.

Then we had to change the away and the home game with Arsenal. Nil-nil at home against ten men, nobody was really positive about the second leg and we went there and won in a really nice manner.

We called it the people's cup, but the whole journey was a squad journey and that's what I love most about it.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY SPECIAL TO AGAIN BE ABLE TO CELEBRATE A TROPHY WIN WITH LIVERPOOL SUPPORTERS…

The Carabao Cup win was something special for all of us. There are so many parts of it that make me burst with happiness.

Firstly, because it really is the competition which encompasses the entire squad, including our young players. As I said, this cup is all about the journey. You don't get to pick up the trophy at Wembley without the crucial contributions in the earlier rounds. These games come in a part of the season where the demands on the team are crazy. Premier League games, Champions League games and international football. So everyone has to contribute and play their part. Without everyone we have no chance.

Yes, the other part that made it incredible was being able to celebrate it with our supporters. The Liverpool section of Wembley…wow! And I mean wow! The atmosphere was one I will remember for the rest of my life. It was outstanding, I really loved it, and it was constant.

They were with us for every second of it. And then after it felt like a party.

I am so pleased we can again have these moments with the people after a long time without having the opportunity to celebrate something.

The world still encounters truly awful things, but at least inside Wembley we were able to have a shared experience which was all about joy.

WITH SUCH A BUSY SCHEDULE AHEAD DID YOU HAVE TO KNOCK THE POST-MATCH CELEBRATIONS ON THE HEAD EARLY?

No. We just waited for the plane, until we got on the bus everything was on-time. The main problem we had was the doping control because that took obviously the longest time, which I was surprised about. You can only have that much time for doping control when your team is anti-alcoholic.

Obviously the party was in the dressing room and then we were all on the bus and then we were still waiting for Caoimh, I think he was the last if I am right. Then we had loud music on the bus, no music on the plane, maybe some music in the cars and then we were home at 12.30.





Then you cannot sleep, or at least I can't, but we gave the boys the day off on the Monday. Then here we were again, training again on the Tuesday before the Norwich FA Cup game. The celebrations were not too much.

HOW DIFFICULT WAS IT TO LEAVE SOME PLAYERS OUT OF YOUR TEAM FOR THE FINAL?

The worst part of my job is disappointing people who don't deserve it. When selecting a squad in the circumstances we had at Wembley, this was so hard. But the truth is even without being on the team-sheet for the final, the win is still just as much about them and what they did for us and this club.

It's not the best comparison, but when you win a league title it's not just the players who feature in the final matchday who are considered champions. It's everyone. Same with the League Cup.

We won it because of what happened at Norwich away, Preston away, Leicester at Anfield and over two games against Arsenal.

DID YOU CONSIDER PLAYING CAOIMHIN KELLEHER AHEAD OF THE CARABAO CUP FINAL TO GIVE HIM A GAME BEFORE HIS WEMBLEY DEBUT?

People asked me two weeks before the final if we will give Caoimhin another game to get some rhythm or whatever. To be 100 per cent honest, it was the first time I thought about it. But that's the life of a no2, especially for a young no2. You just have to be ready when you are called.



IT WAS A BIG CALL TO PLAY HIM AHEAD OF ALISSON IN A MAJOR CUP FINAL…

Even in professional football, there should be space for some sentiment. So when it's a young boy, we ask him to do a lot, he gets the competition, he plays and then I say for the final, 'No, you don't play'.

I am two things: a professional football manager and a human being. And the human being won this time!

It's so nice, he deserves it. At the AXA Training Centre we have a wall in the goalkeeping area where the goalkeepers are on who won something. Now we can put Caoimh on as well. It's exactly how it should be, absolutely great.

WE WON IT BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED AT NORWICH AWAY, PRESTON AWAY, LEICESTER AT ANFIELD AND OVER TWO GAMES AGAINST ARSENAL

TELL US ABOUT CAOIMHIN'S JOURNEY FROM ACADEMY TO SCORING THE WINNING PENALTY IN A MAJOR CUP FINAL…

I don't know when I saw Caoimhin the first time but it's true, it's quite a journey from when I saw him the first time, from the boy I saw to the man he is today.

I saw from the first second that he is an incredible talent. If you know how a football team works, you know that goalies are very often separate, so I don't see them all the time, but I see them in decisive moments. So, the development from John Achterberg and Jack Robinson is absolutely top-class.

Alisson Becker is the best goalie in the world, for me, but to be 100 per cent honest Caoimhin Kelleher is the best no2 in the world as well, especially for the way we play.

He had an incredible game at Wembley. He proved that the decision to line him up was absolutely right. And then in a very spectacular penalty shoot-out, he showed the whole range of his skillset.

First and foremost he's a goalkeeper but he finished one off with his really skilled feet. Top-class.

HOW TOUGH WAS IT TO LOSE THIAGO TO AN INJURY SUSTAINED IN THE WARM-UP AT WEMBLEY?

It was a very emotional moment. We were all surprised. I came into the dressing room, I watched the whole warm-up and didn't see anything but when we came in he was on the [treatment] bed and the physios told me he felt something in the hamstring, which is not good.

Then we had to make the decision he could not start. In this moment when you are that close to playing a final…for the one player who probably won the most silverware in the whole squad, or as much as the whole squad together, showing then this kind of emotion… I didn't like that he didn't feel that good, but the desire to play a final I liked a lot.




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HARVEY ELLIOTT WASN'T IN THE INITIAL SQUAD BUT WAS THEN PROMOTED TO THE BENCH, CAME ON AND CONVERTED HIS PENALTY…
That's how you use a squad. We wanted to start with Thiago, but when Thiago was struggling we put Naby Keita in so it meant we wanted to put another creative player in Harvey on the bench. Harvey wasn't in the squad but then was the first to come on. That's how it is sometimes.

HOW PLEASED WERE YOU WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF LUIS DIAZ IN HIS FIRST CUP FINAL FOR LIVERPOOL?
He did really well in the final. We need this kind of quality obviously and as we said before, we didn't confuse him too much with too much information. He knows how we want to play and how he has to play and he's doing really well.

We just took him off at Wembley because we saw he got tired. He was tired earlier but he was still fighting really hard.

It was an incredibly intense game, I have to say. I'm not sure I saw a final like this. Okay, when one team is up then obviously why should it be intense when one team is managing the game and the other one is chasing it. In this game both teams were going for it. The intensity was absolutely insane.

IT WAS AN INCREDIBLY INTENSE GAME, I HAVE TO SAY. I'M NOT SURE I SAW A FINAL LIKE THIS. BOTH TEAMS WERE GOING FOR IT, THE INTENSITY WAS ABSOLUTELY INSANE

THE INTENSITY WAS THERE FOR ALL TO SEE, BUT WAS IT THE MENTALITY OF YOUR TEAM WHICH GOT YOU THROUGH THE 120 MINUTES AND TO WIN ON PENALTIES?
I would say the mentality of both teams was on an incredible level. The tempo of the game was incredible, the way both teams tried to close the other team down for 120 minutes – trying to play football yourself, which is difficult, and then the opponent is defending like both teams defended.

That showed that there is not any doubt about mentality, but not only us, Chelsea as well. That we then won the penalty shoot-out 11-10 shows you as well. The concentration level of the whole game was insane, of both teams, really.

Caoimh's last save from [Romelu] Lukaku…when you see it back you think: oh my God, that must be a goal! But Caoimh saves the ball with his foot because of the concentration level.







NO TEAM YET IN THE HISTORY OF BRITISH FOOTBALL EVER WON THE QUADRUPLE, RIGHT? THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S REALLY DIFFICULT. IT'S JUST THE REALITY

That's how the penalty shoot-out was as well. So yes, that's very good and very important.

Will we have that for the rest of the season? I don't know, but we will try.

FINALLY, SINCE BEATING CHELSEA AT WEMBLEY ALL THE MEDIA TALK HAS BEEN 'CAN LIVERPOOL WIN THE QUADRUPLE?' HOW DO YOU VIEW IT?

No team yet in the history of British football ever won the quadruple, right? That's because it's really difficult.

We won the Carabao Cup, we are behind City in the Premier League, we had to play Norwich in the FA Cup after playing 120 minutes on Sunday, then we played West Ham.

The fun part about their job [the media] is that they count the points before we play the games, but we have to play them still. We are close to nothing at the moment, we are just still in three competitions. That's all we are, like some other teams are as well.

It's better that people think we can do good things instead of thinking we are useless, but it's not very important or even helpful because as I said, we face a lot of really good football teams between now and the end of May.

Okay, the only team that could win the quadruple is us because we won the first competition, but even City, with all the quality they have in the last few years, couldn't win the quadruple. That says pretty much everything because there are so many good teams.

It's really difficult and that's why nobody has to dampen any excitement down – it's just the reality. The reality to win something is that you have to be focused on the next step and not on the one after that, otherwise you will struggle. That's what we do.



"IT'S WORKED OUT PRETTY WELL FOR ME SO FAR"

Andy Robertson has another winner's medal and is bearing down on an incredible full-back record, but his talented feet remain firmly on the floor





Words: William Hughes

The advances in full-back play since the dawn of the 21st century have been particularly apparent on Merseyside. Across Stanley Park, Everton left-back Leighton Baines set a new high bar for defenders in terms of goalscoring contributions. During 13 seasons at Goodison Park and two campaigns at Wigan Athletic, he produced 53 assists in 348 Premier League games – the best tally by a defender in the competition's history.

Baines hails from Kirkby and nowadays the work put in close to his childhood home at the AXA Training Centre is reaping rewards for those on the red half of the city.

Last month Liverpool's full-backs Trent Alexander-Arnold and Andy Robertson played their 150th Premier League games for the club but they are already closing in on Baines' tally.

Robertson, whose career tally also includes 57 Premier League games played for Hull City in 2014/15 and 2016/17, entered March with 48 to his name, while Alexander-Arnold was closing in on 43.

They are incredible numbers for defenders, with the only other contender among full-backs being former Chelsea, Blackburn Rovers and Southampton defender Graeme Le Saux (44).

Robbo says it is indicative of how expectations of full-backs have shifted in the modern game. "When I talk about assists it's because I feel that people almost judge me and Trent off them now.

"To be honest, I actually think a couple of my best games this season have been games where I've not got an assist. But of course it's a good feeling when you do get them.

"You want to contribute to goals and we are more often than



IF I DO GET TO NUMBER ONE IN TERMS OF ASSISTS I'VE GOT THE LITTLE SCOUSER BEHIND ME WHO WILL CLEAR ME OUT OF THE PARK! HOPEFULLY I CAN GET THERE BEFORE HIM AND I CAN CLAIM IT FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS BEFORE HE TAKES IT OFF ME



not assisting them than we are scoring them. The feeling you get when you put in a good cross and it gets put in the back of the net, or you produce a good piece of link-up play that produces a goal, does give you confidence.

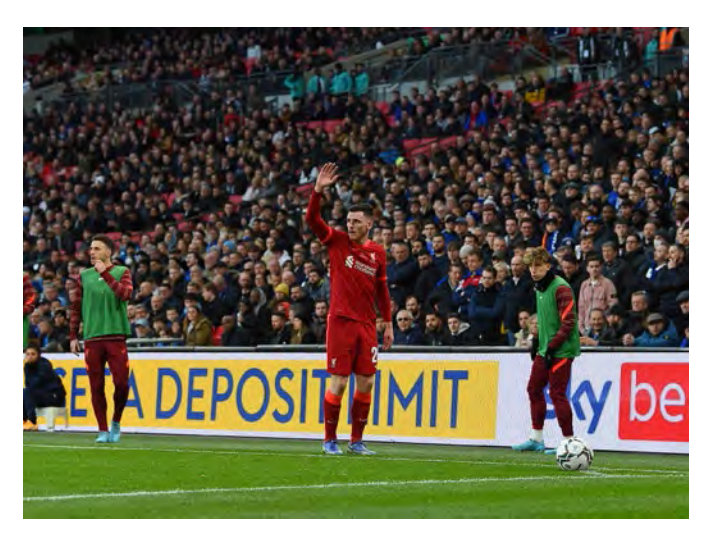
"You always want to strive for more, so of course it's a target that I've got [to pass the tally of 53]. Leighton Baines was an incredible footballer and 53 assists is pretty good going. I'm second now out of defenders and of course I want to be number one.

"But I know that if I do get to number one I've got the little Scouser behind me who will clear me out of the park! Hopefully I can get there before him and I can claim it for a couple of months before he takes it off me.

"It's part of our game now and full-backs are more attacking and contribute more goals and assists than they probably ever have and it's something that me and Trent will try to continue to do."

Andy admits that the skill-set required of players such as himself and Alexander-Arnold has perhaps made the position more attractive to youngsters watching the Premier League. After all, he admits that when he was a boy watching Celtic, he







dreamed of being a Henrik Larsson rather than a [left-back] Tom Boyd.

"I definitely wanted to be Larsson but I just wasn't good enough – that was the problem! So Tom Boyd was maybe a bit more realistic and he was also a very good player for Celtic and Scotland.

"Growing up, I obviously loved different players and when I got to a certain age I realised that full-back suited me best and the way I wanted to play. Then I started to watch people closely and pick up anything I could and apply it to my game, which obviously worked well for me when I was younger."

Former Reds centre-back Jamie Carragher famously once said of his fellow Sky Sports pundit Gary Neville: "No-one wants to grow up to be a Gary Neville." However, perhaps the combination of foraging forward runs and dangerous crosses into the box – as demanded of Robertson and Alexander-Arnold – now means that verdict is being reassessed when it comes to the modern day full-back?

"The role has changed a bit. Me and Trent have been part of that transition along with all the full-backs who are playing just now.

"Maybe the full-back role has become a little bit more interesting to kids who are growing up playing the game. It's a lot more of an influential position as such. You're more involved in the game than you probably were back in the day, so people growing up right now want to be a full-back, although I'm not sure they would want to be me!

"However, they might want to be a full-back and that's crucial because full-backs continue to be important to football and hopefully good ones are coming through from the youths.

"It'll be interesting to see in ten years' time what the role of a full-back looks like then, how it evolves and continues to develop."

Robbo admits it took him time to get to grips with the different expectations asked of him as a left-back in Jürgen Klopp's side following his move from Hull City in 2017.

"It was just a case of trying to learn the ropes. I was at a team in Hull that were in the Premier League but obviously we defended a lot more and we were more a team that sat back and tried to hit teams on the counter-attack because we were one of the lesser teams in the league. Then flipping that and going to one of the biggest clubs in the league and one of the best teams was a change. Suddenly I was playing for a team that was always on the front foot and always trying to put pressure on.



"So it was a case of trying to adapt to that, which was completely flipping what I was doing the season before. It took a wee bit of time but we got there in the end. I learnt it pretty quickly on the training ground and then I just had to implement it into games.

"I just had to get my chance to go and show that I could do it and luckily I got that."

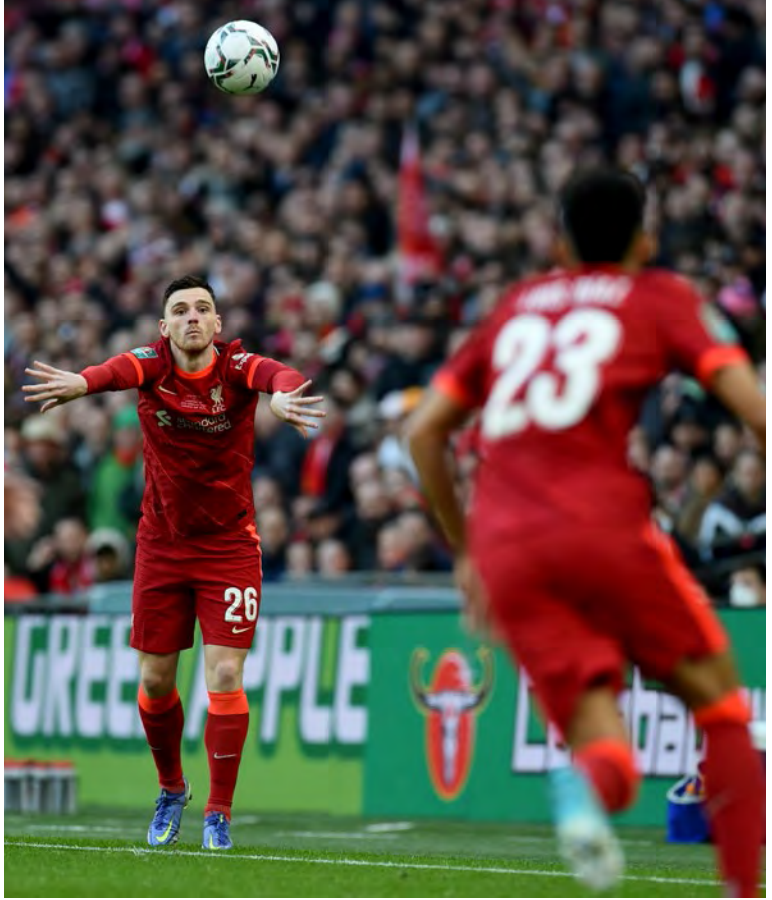
The physical demands of performing in Klopp's high-pressing side was something he found more straightforward.

"That's about mentality more than anything. It's about being willing to do it and about being willing to follow the game-plan because we know it works. But we also know that we have to be at 100 per cent to make it work. I think we're pretty good at it now but that's how it needs to continue.

"Some games are more difficult than others in terms of implementing our game-plan but we always try to find a way and that's why the results have been really good since the manager's come in. We've won trophies and we've won a lot of games and we want to continue to do that. We know what it takes and we need to keep that going."







It took Robertson a few months to become a regular in the Liverpool side but he says that he always felt he would have his opportunity.

"During the tough times, I was in a position where I was coming into the training ground on my own at weekends doing running and trying to stay fit. But I always thought in the back of my mind that the moment I got my chance, hopefully there was not going to be any stopping me.

"From the first game I played, I showed that I will run until that final whistle and give everything in the game and I've always shown that.

"Yes, at times my passing won't be up-to-scratch and my defending too, but what I can control is how hard I work and how much I run. I've always tried to do that and I don't think anyone could argue against that.

"I just knew that if I could get my chance and get the nod to start then I could show that. Thankfully I managed to do that and I've not really looked back since."

Looking back is not something Robertson has ever been minded to do. The Scot, who turned 28 on 11 March, says he hopes there will be plenty of time to do that once he hangs up his boots.

"I try to always look forward. I can't control anything that has happened in the past – not that I would change much as it's been pretty good – but I'm always one to look forward. I always look to the next game or the next thing that's ahead of me.

"There will come a time when I'm retired or I'm finished with football to look back at all my memories and the people that I played with. I've always been focused on trying to look forward so I'll continue to do that as it's worked out pretty well for me so far, and long may that continue."

One thing Reds fans might see more of in the future is Robertson's link-up with Luis Diaz down the Liverpool left. The pair worked well in tandem during the Colombian's Premier League debut against Leicester City last month and Andy has been impressed with the way the former FC Porto man has adapted quickly to life on Merseyside.

He also believes that Diaz can look to Diogo Jota for inspiration as to how he can impact the front-line.

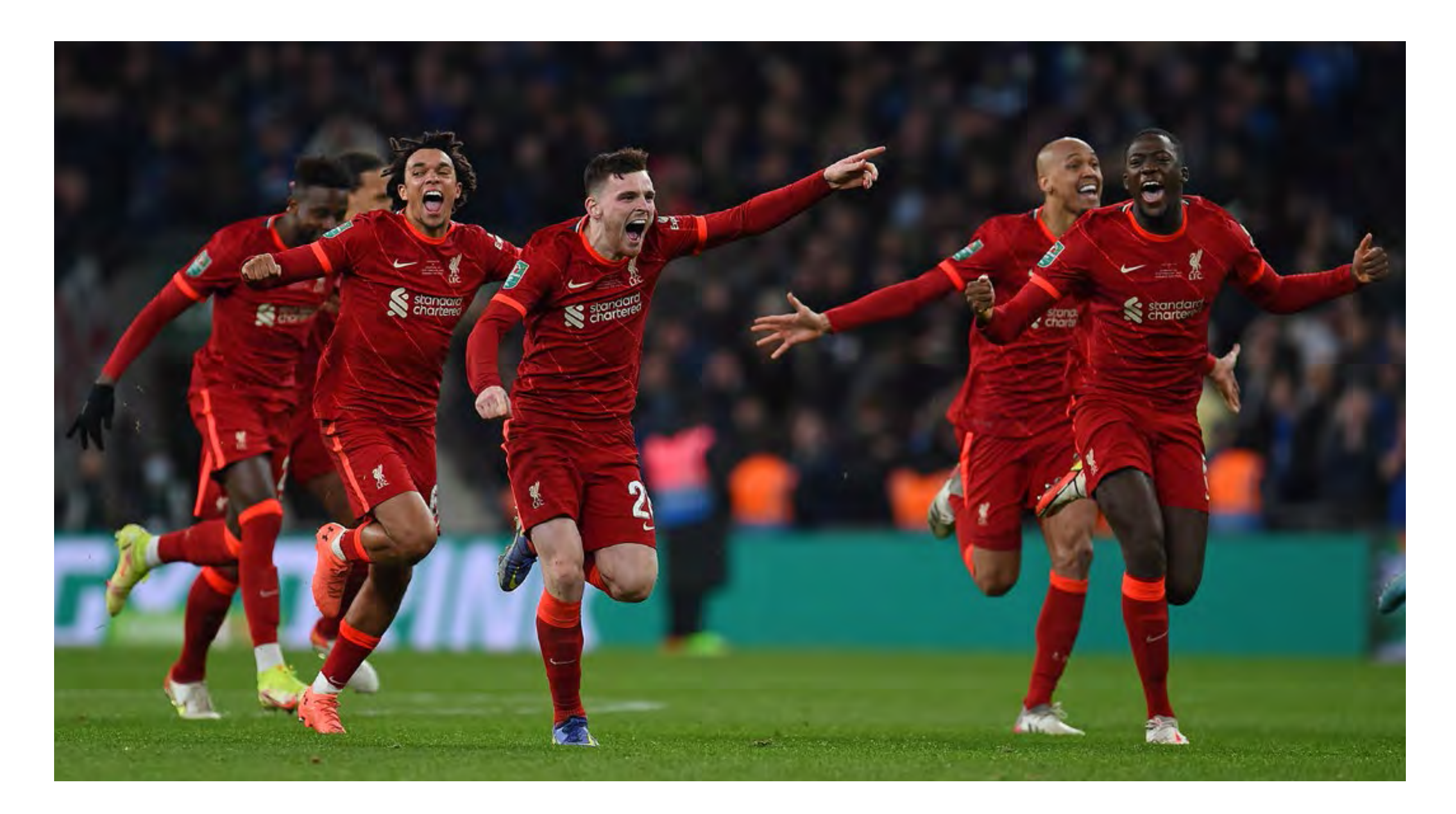
"I think Jots speaks for himself. He's been here a year and a half now and he's a big part of the squad. Last season I thought he was excellent but this season he's taking it to a new level.

"He came here when maybe a lot of players might not have done because the established front-three were getting highly spoken about and they still get highly spoken about because they're three unbelievable players, but Jots has now added to that.

"He's an unbelievable player and he's now part of a front-four, and Diaz has already shown big signs that he'll do the exact same.

"I thought he was excellent on his debut against Leicester. I played pretty close to him and he certainly fitted into the Premier

JOTS WAS EXCELLENT LAST SEASON BUT NOW HE'S TAKEN IT TO A NEW LEVEL, HE'S PART OF A FRONT-FOUR AND DIAZ HAS ALREADY SHOWN HE'LL DO THE SAME



THE CARABAO CUP FINAL WAS AN OPEN GAME, BUT I THINK BY THE END EVERYONE WAS JUST KNACKERED AND YOU COULD JUST SEE BOTH SETS OF TEAMS LOOKING AT EACH OTHER THINKING: WHEN WILL THIS END? SOMEBODY HAD TO MISS A PENALTY AND IT'S HORRIBLE REALLY. BUT FORTUNATELY IT WASN'T ONE OF OUR LADS

League, flying into tackles and he's also got incredible skill. We'll be patient with him but he's looked ready from day one.

"It's important that we have competition throughout the squad and we've got that right now. We went into the game at Burnley last month having to leave five incredible players back at the training ground because of everyone being fit and that's the difficult part of the game.

"But everyone's fighting hard in training, everyone's wanting to be in that matchday squad and wanting that jersey and that can only be helpful to us."

Diaz didn't have to wait long to bag his first winner's medal as a Liverpool player and Robertson was also delighted to collect his fifth major honour with the club following the epic Carabao Cup win over Chelsea at Wembley.

"It has been really tight between us and Chelsea all season," he said after the final.

"The two games in the Premier League have both been draws. Today, we both had chances. I think they probably had the better chances, to be honest with you. Quite an open game, but I think by the end everyone was just knackered and I think everyone could just see both sets of teams were kind of looking at each other thinking: when will this end?

"It was really tough on the body and a lot of work was put into it. The longer it goes, somebody has to miss a penalty and it's horrible really. But fortunately it wasn't one of our lads."

Now, as the season enters its final third, Robertson hopes to enjoy further success with his country as well as his club.

After captaining Scotland at last summer's Euros – their first major tournament finals since 1998 – he now hopes to lead them to a place in this year's FIFA World Cup finals in Qatar.

Scotland were due to host Ukraine at Hampden Park on 24 March in the play-off semi-final, with the winners visiting Austria or Wales in their final. However, in the light of recent events, the FIFA Organising Committee has agreed to Ukraine's request to postpone the fixture until June.

"Obviously qualifying for the Euros was massive for our country and for us as players," says Andy. "We got a feeling for what it was like to play at a major tournament so we now want to go to the World Cup.

"It would be incredible to represent our country at the World Cup but I've still got a lot of Liverpool games before then so I'm trying not to think about it too much. The time will come to focus on that and try to dream about playing in a World Cup and hopefully we will get to achieve that."



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THE NAME GAME





How much do you really know about Anfield appellations? Now there's a question you never thought you'd be asked…

1. Easy one to kick off – which three players in the current first-team squad have double-barrelled surnames?

2 True or false: 'Jota' is Portuguese for the letter 'J' and actually stands for Diogo's middle name Jose?



3 Which three Joes have played for Liverpool in the Premier League era?

4 What were the surnames of the two Aussie Brads who played for Liverpool in the Noughties?

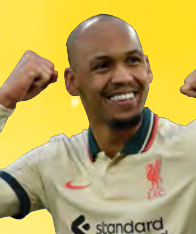
5 The surnames of which two former Liverpool defenders have the letters 'ky' in them?

6 Four players with the first name Luis have appeared for Liverpool in the Premier League – who are they?

7 An anagram of which current Reds star is 'Polite Jam'?

8 What is midfielder Fabinho's full name?

9 What's the technical name for the little roof symbol over the letter 'a' in Thiago Alcântara?



10 Kostas Tsimikas' first name is a shortened version of what?



11 Apart from James Milner, who is the only other Englishman to play for Liverpool in the Noughties whose surname begins with an 'M' and ends with an 'r'?

12 What's the first name of Kaide Gordon's elder brother, who plays for Mansfield Town?





16 Before Roberto Firmino, who was the last proper Bobby to play for Liverpool?

17 From which of Germany's neighbours does the surname Klopp historically originate: (a) the Netherlands (b) Austria (c) Poland?

13 Two Harveys have played for Liverpool this season – in what year were they both born?

14 Whose surname scores the most points in Scrabble: Andy Robertson or Jordan Henderson?



18 Which two current stars have all of the following letters in their names: A, I, K, M, N, O and T?

19 What is Divock Origi's middle name?

15 What is the English equivalent to Caoimhin Kelleher's first name (a) Colin (b) Christopher (c) Kevin?



20 And which senior LFC star has the middle name Ramses?

21 Other than Mo Salah, how many Liverpool players in the Premier League era have had the initials 'MS'?

22 And other than Sadio Mane, how many Liverpool players in the Premier League era have had the initials 'SM'?

23 Who's the young Reds goalkeeper with all five vowels in his full name?

24 Which current outfielder has his first name only on the back of his shirt?

25 What were the words on the front of the jumper modelled by Naby Keita on Twitter last Christmas?



ANSWERS: Trent Alexander-Arnold, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, Elijah Dixon-Bonner; 2. True – his full name is Diogo Jose Teixeira da Silva; 3. Joe Gomez, Joe Allen and Joe Cole; 4. Smith and Jones – left-back and goalkeeper respectively; 5. Sotirios Kyrgiakos and Paul Konchesky; 6. Luis Diaz, Luis Suarez, Luis Alberto and Luis Garcia; 7. Joel Matip; 8. Fabio Henrique Tavares; 9. A circumflex; 10. Konstantinos; 11. Neil Mellor; 12. Kellan; 13. Harvey Elliott and Harvey Blair were both born in 2003; 14. Henderson scores 13, Robertson scores 11 – all the letters are worth one point except 'H' for four points, 'B' for three and 'D' for two; 15. (c) Kevin; 16. Scottish forward Bobby Graham, who played from 1964 to 1972; 17. (c) The Netherlands; 18. Takumi Minamino and Ibrahima Konate; 19. Okoth; 20. Alisson Becker; 21. Three – Martin Skrtel, Mamadou Sakho and Momo Sissoko; 22. Two – Simon Mignolet and Steve McManaman; 23. Marcelo Pitaluga; 24. Virgil van Dijk; 25.'FELIZ NABY LAD'.

FANCY A GAME?

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FIRMINO
9
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Firmino Firsts

They say you never forget your first time, but can Bobby remember the first time he played football, scored a goal, watched a game on the TV or heard his name sung? There's only one way to find out…

Now in his seventh season as a Liverpool player, Roberto Firmino passed the 300-appearances mark for the Reds earlier this season.

He's played more games for this club than Michael Owen, Jan Molby, Didi Hamann, Steve McMahon and Jimmy Case and is closing in on 100 goals for Liverpool. Add to that over 65 assists, four major honours, several no-look finishes and some memorable goal celebrations and it's no wonder that the 30-year-old feels at home here.

"It's been almost seven years already," he says. "I've been here a good while now, I feel settled, at home and dedicated 100 percent to football.

"I love living here and playing at a massive club like Liverpool. I'm really happy and living for the day – what happens in the future is in God's hands. I make the most of every day, taking things one day and one game at a time."

Knowing Bobby as we do there are still more memories to make, but on this occasion it was time to find out if our number nine can remember the first time he experienced or achieved a number of things. And what better way to start than with his first conversation with Liverpool manager Jürgen Klopp…







MY FIRST...CHAT WITH JÜRGEN KLOPP

That's difficult! I remember we exchanged messages and in person it was when he arrived here at Liverpool. I told him how happy I was that he'd come here and here I am today, very happy alongside him. His arrival here changed everything. We really clicked and got on great immediately. I knew him already from playing against him in Germany. I knew him, he knew me. I grew and developed a lot here thanks to him.

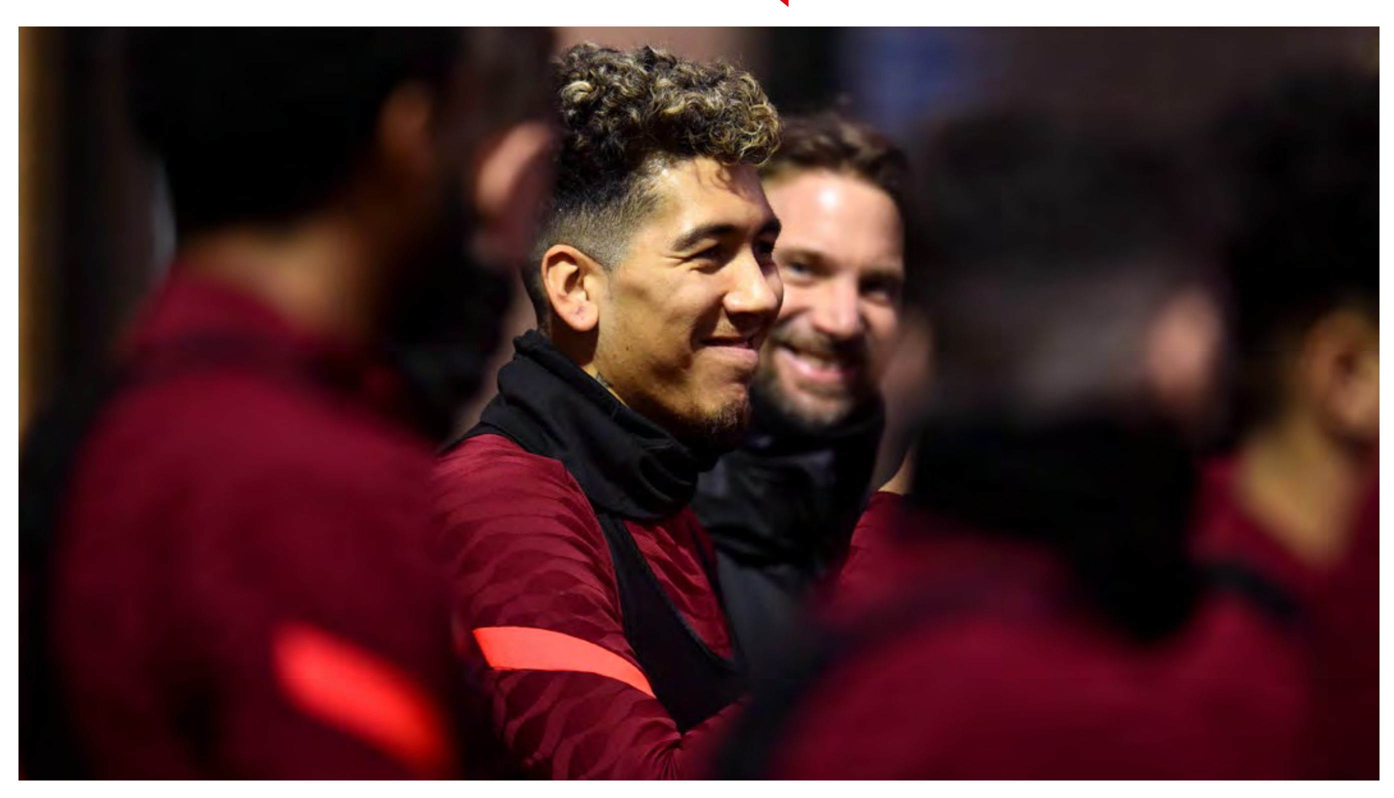
MY FIRST...TIME KICKING A FOOTBALL

As far back as I can remember. I can't remember how old I was, but I remember when I was six or seven I already loved playing football. I would take the ball with me to bed. I'd play football every day after school. That's when I started getting into football when I was about six or seven.

MY FIRST...LIVE FOOTBALL MATCH

It was in my hometown. My dad's team, I started supporting them as well. CRB – Clube de Regatas Brasil – from my city, Maceio. I was six or seven and my dad took me to the stadium and I started going every week from then on.

Jürgen's arrival here changed everything. We really clicked and got on great immediately. I knew him already from playing against him in Germany. I knew him, he knew me. I grew and developed a lot here thanks to him



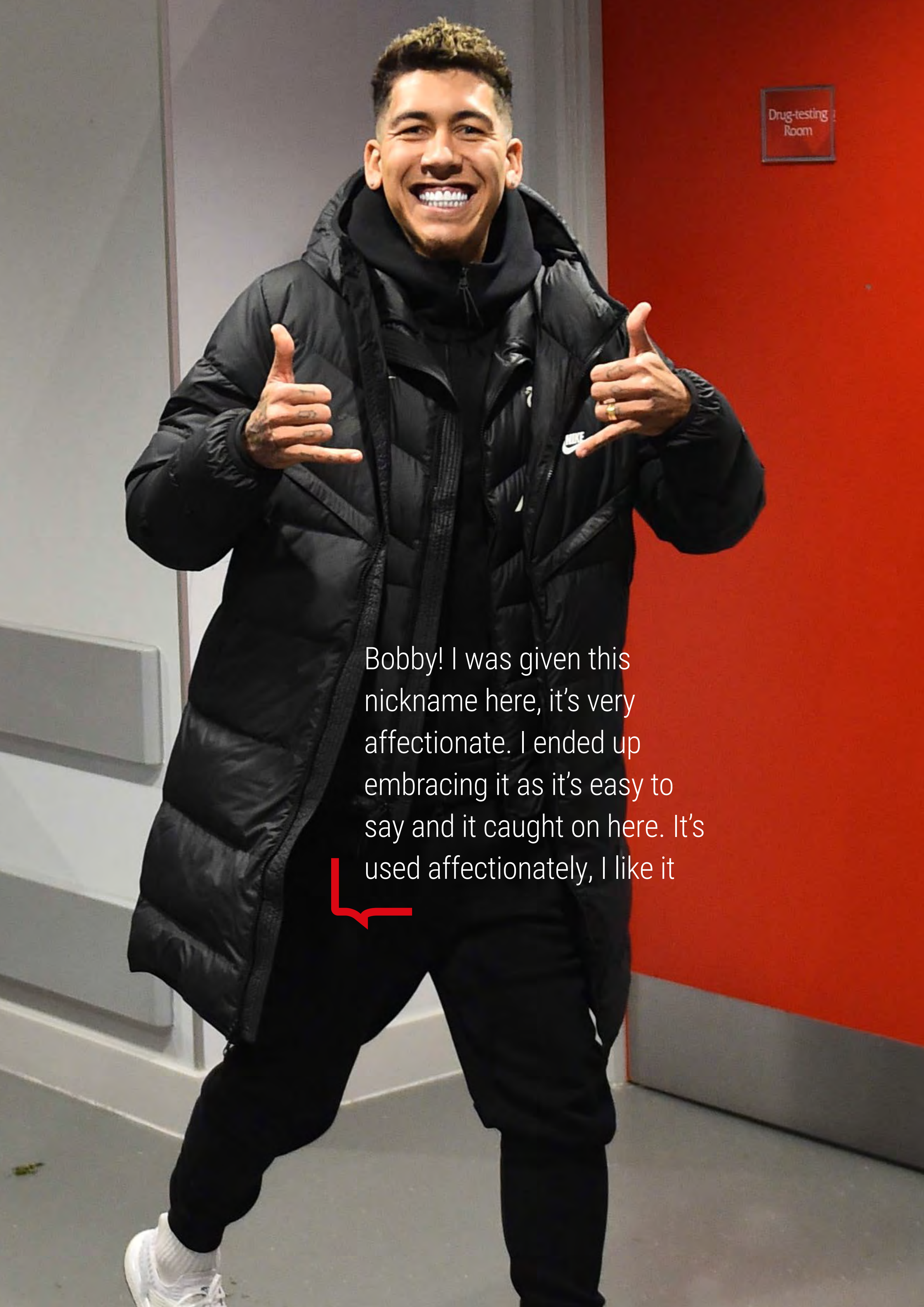
MY FIRST...IDEA THAT A CAREER IN FOOTBALL WAS POSSIBLE
I think I was already playing for the CRB youth team. I was fourteen and it already looked like I could make it in football.

MY FIRST...MATCH AS A PROFESSIONAL
If I remember correctly, I was seventeen. It was for Figueirense against Ponte Preta. We lost unfortunately, 2-1 I think. It was a second-division game and was a memorable occasion for me as I'd made it as a professional at seventeen. I remained in the first team from that day on.

MY FIRST...GOAL IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL
It was for Figueirense again, in the State Championship away to Sao Caetano. We won 2-1.

MY FIRST...PIECE OF ADVICE I'D HAVE GIVEN TO MY YOUNGER SELF
To be more patient perhaps. To settle quicker in football. Like it or not it takes about a year to adapt to the football here in England as it's very intense and played at a high level. I didn't have a problem with the climate so there's not much more to say.





Bobby! I was given this nickname here, it's very affectionate. I ended up embracing it as it's easy to say and it caught on here. It's used affectionately, I like it

MY FIRST...PREMIER LEAGUE GAME AND GOAL

My first Premier League game, when was it…[thinks]. I think it was away at…this should be easy...Stoke City. It was Stoke City away. My first Premier League goal was in a 4-1 win against Manchester City. That was away as well, but my first goal at Anfield was against Arsenal.

MY FIRST...GOAL CELEBRATION

Here at Liverpool ever since my first goal I have done goal celebrations. I had goal celebrations in Brazil too. I can't remember exactly what my first goal celebration for Figueirense was, but I did a little dance.

MY FIRST...NICKNAME AT LIVERPOOL

Bobby! I was given this nickname here, it's very affectionate. I ended up embracing it as it's easy to say and it caught on here. It's used affectionately, I like it.



MY FIRST...LIVERPOOL HAT-TRICK

It was against Arsenal at Anfield. For some time I had been wanting to score my first hat-trick so I was really happy. My team-mates all signed the ball afterwards and it is on display on my wall next to the man-of-the-match trophy. It was a very special day.

MY FIRST...OWN-GOAL

Own-goal? Never! You know I'm an attacker? I only score goals against the opposition!





The standout game was against Flamengo in the Club World Cup final when I scored, but there have been many important games

MY FIRST...RED CARD

I've never had one as far as I can remember [this may be so, although at Hoffenheim club mascot 'Hoffi' was once sent off for running onto the pitch to celebrate a goal against Eintracht Braunschweig by Firmino, who was also booked for taking his shirt off!].

MY FIRST...TROPHY IN FOOTBALL

Incredibly it came after playing almost 10 years in Europe. It was 2019, I'd been at Liverpool for four years when I won my first trophy: the Champions League. Then along came another three trophies. I was twenty-eight when I won my first trophy.

MY FIRST...CUP FINAL WINNER FOR LIVERPOOL

It was against Flamengo in the FIFA Club World Cup. I think that was a standout game in my life, a game where I was decisive, but there have been so many important games here at Liverpool.

MY FIRST...MEMORY OF THE KOP SINGING 'SI SENOR'

I can't remember the game, but the first time they chanted my name was a year after I arrived. It wasn't the Si Senor song though, it was just 'Bob-by Firmino!'



MY FIRST...WORLD CUP MEMORIES

I remember Brazil losing to France in the 1998 World Cup, I cried a lot. It was really sad.

The 2002 World Cup came straight after, I really experienced that one. I would wake up in the early hours to watch the games and Brazil won their fifth World Cup. It was a really memorable World Cup, I remember as if it were yesterday: waking up in the early hours, and cheering the Brazil team on.

For the final I had my haircut just like *Ronaldo Fenomeno* [the 'Phenomenon']. I remember it as if it were yesterday, it had a big influence upon me.

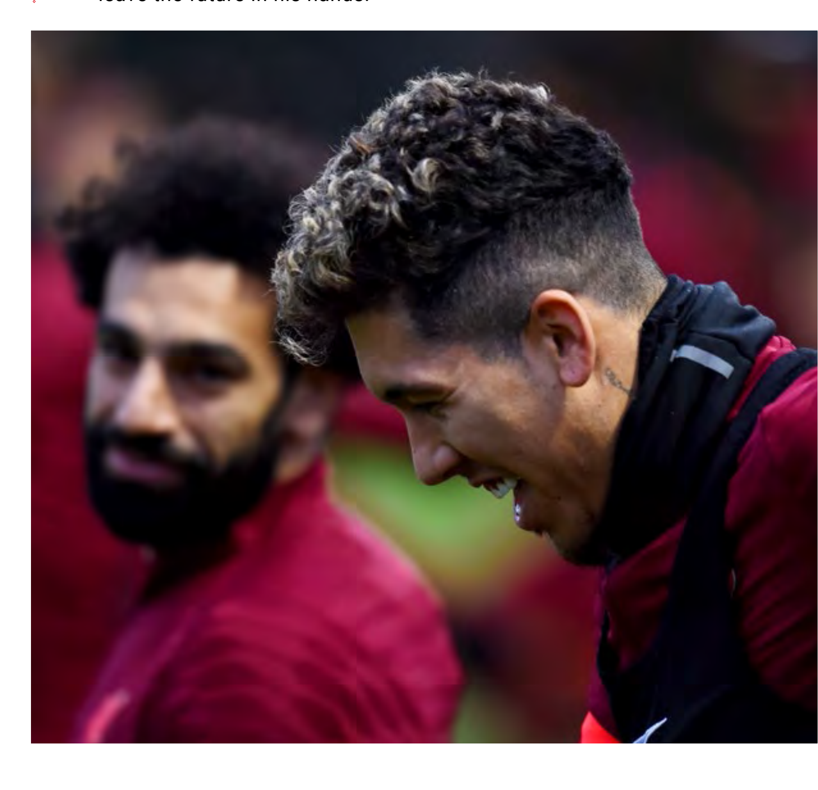
MY FIRST...THOUGHT ABOUT THE 2022 WORLD CUP FINALS IN QATAR

I'm working towards being at the next World Cup. I want to be doing well here at my club, doing my best and working hard in order to be called up.

I want to be in the Brazil national team, it's a dream of mine and I aim to be there, especially for the World Cup. I'll give it my all and work hard so that I can be in the Selecao for the World Cup.

MY FIRST...THOUGHT ON WHAT LIFE WILL BE LIKE IN 10 YEARS' TIME

I don't know. As I've said before I think about the here and now, the present. I trust in God to look after the future. I want to live what God has for me today, the purpose of my life today and I leave the future in his hands.





The Liverpool Irish

In a month when St Patrick's Day is celebrated around the world, we're following our feature on Welsh Reds by Dublin down with an Irish XI of Liverpool players past and present – we're sure you'll agree it's a Cork-ing line-up!

Seventeen men who have worn the red shirt of Liverpool Football Club have also played full international football for the Republic of Ireland. Our line-up does not include stars of the 1920s and 1930s Elisha Scott and Bill Lacey who both played matches under the banner of the FAI.

Therefore our eleven is a strictly post-war affair and starts off naturally enough at no1 with the most recent man to represent the Reds and the Greens – and a Carabao Cup final hero.

CAOIMHIN KELLEHER

GOALKEEPER 2019-present; LFC apps 16 (as at 18.02.22); Republic of Ireland caps 2

What a penalty that was in the Carabao Cup final shootout! Described by manager Jürgen Klopp as "a John Achterberg project," the keeper has impressed whenever handed a first-team opportunity.

Trademark characteristics are his calmness in all situations and an ability to distribute the ball quickly and accurately from the back. He was also the penalty shoot-out hero in the Carabao Cup quarter-final win over Leicester City and, having also kept a clean sheet in the second leg of the semi-final at Arsenal, kept the gloves for the showpiece event at Wembley last month and didn't put a foot wrong.

Liverpool signed Kelleher from Ringmahon Rangers in Cork in the summer of 2015 and his progress was rewarded with a first-team debut at MK Dons in the Carabao Cup in September 2019.

He challenged Adrian for the role of back-up keeper last season, appearing twice in both the Premier League and Champions League. At the end of that campaign he made his full international debut, coming on as a second-half substitute in Ireland's friendly with Hungary.

PHIL BABB

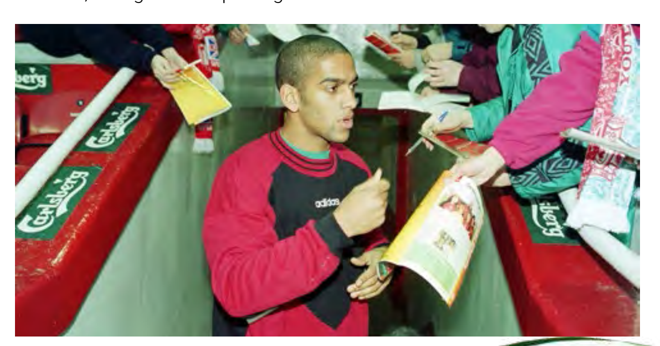
CENTRE-BACK 1994-1999; LFC apps 170; ROI caps 35

After captaining Coventry City and starring for the Republic at the 1994 World Cup, he was made Britain's most expensive defender when bought in along with John Scales to solve Liverpool's defensive problems.

He became an integral part of Roy Evans' preferred 3-5-2 formation with Scales and Neil Ruddock alongside him in the centre of defence.

A piece of trivia that he became known for was that he scored his only Coventry goal against Liverpool and his only Liverpool goal against Coventry!

Phil was a regular in his first two-and-a-half seasons at the club but injuries later disrupted his rhythm and he was unable to command a regular place under Gerard Houllier. After being loaned to Tranmere Rovers, he signed for Sporting Lisbon in the summer of 2000.





STEVE FINNAN

RIGHT-BACK 2003-2008; LFC apps 217; Republic of Ireland caps 53

The Limerick lad benefited considerably after Rafael Benitez took over as Reds manager in the summer of 2004 and proved to be a model of consistency.

In 2005 he played in the Champions League final as the Reds were crowned kings of Europe for the fifth time. Overall he was selected for 99 of the club's 114 Premier League matches between August 2004 and May 2007.

"Finnan is a player who will always play at a consistent level," Benitez said. "He will be seven, eight, nine or even ten out of ten every week. Some players find a good level for individual games but don't do the same every week. Finnan does it for a whole season."

Towards the end of January 2008 he announced his retirement from international football after being picked for the 50th time by the Republic. Coach Giovanni Trapattoni persuaded him out of retirement later that year and he added three more games to his overall cap-count.

FAI

MARK LAWRENSON

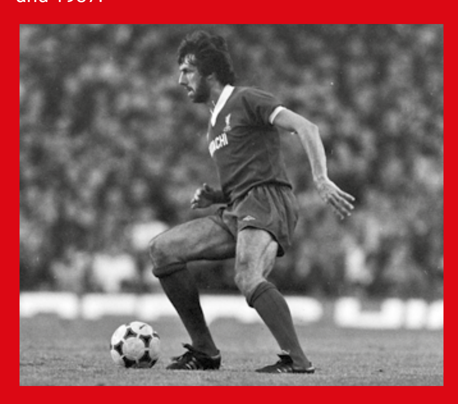
CENTRE-BACK 1981-1988; LFC apps 356; Republic of Ireland caps 39

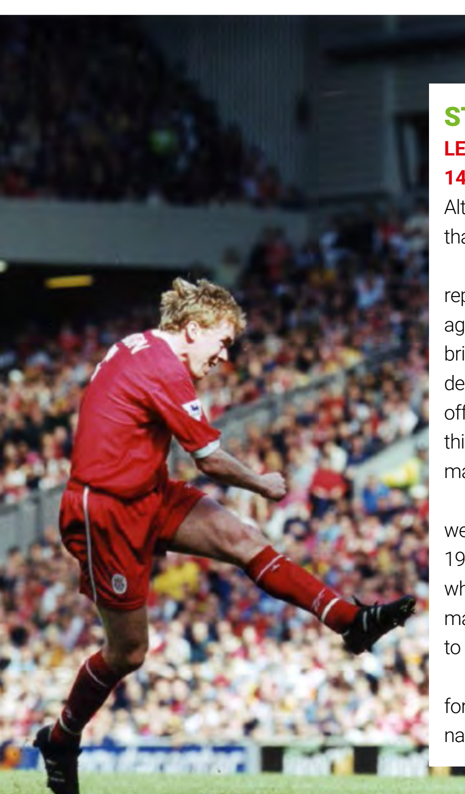
'Lawro' would become known as a classy centre-back whose pace and ability on the ball made him a key member of the successful Reds sides of the 1980s.

His partnership with Alan Hansen was one of the best in the club's history and the duo starred as Liverpool landed the league-and-FA-Cup double for the only time in the club's history in 1986.

Mark started out at Liverpool as a left-back and figured regularly as they won the title in 1981/82, a prospect that had seemed a long way off that Christmas. He played a big part in the 3-1 win over Spurs in the penultimate fixture that clinched the title. His towering header past former Anfield favourite Ray Clemence cancelled out Glenn Hoddle's first-half strike before he teed up a goal for Kenny Dalglish. It was the first of five league championships he won at Anfield, along with a European Cup, an FA Cup and three League Cups.

Now a regular on LFC TV, Lawrenson also represented Ireland for a decade between 1977 and 1987.





STEVE STAUNTON

LEFT-BACK 1988-2000 (two spells); LFC apps 148; Republic of Ireland caps 102

Although 'Stan' played as a left-back more often than not, his versatility was also a handy asset.

He once struck a second-half hat-trick after replacing Ian Rush up front in a League Cup tie against Wigan in October 1989 and even made a brief starring appearance in goal in a Merseyside derby 10 years later. Sander Westerveld was sent off a few minutes after Liverpool had made their third and final substitution and Staunton was the man to deputise!

He signed from Dundalk in 1986 after a two-week trial. A member of the title-winning team of 1989/90, he was deemed surplus to requirements when Graeme Souness replaced Kenny Dalglish as manager. However, Roy Evans brought him back to Anfield for a second spell in July 1998.

Among an elite band of players to win 100 caps for his country, Steve also went on to manage his national team between 2006 and 2007.

Words: William Hughes

RAY HOUGHTON

CENTRE MIDFIELD 1987-1992; LFC apps 202; Republic of Ireland caps 73

Although born in Glasgow, he went on to star for Ireland as his father was born in Donegal. He enjoyed some of his best days in football in the green shirt and scored two of the most important goals in the Irish national team's history.

Ray grabbed the winner against England in the opening group game at the 1988 European Championships. Six years later, he was the hero again when Ireland defeated Italy to reach the last 16 of the World Cup.

A skilful and energetic midfielder, he is often viewed as the final piece in the jigsaw in Kenny Dalglish's Liverpool side which cruised to the league title in 1987/88. He suited Liverpool's style perfectly, slotting in on the right side of midfield with John Barnes on the opposite flank and usually two of Steve McMahon, Ronnie Whelan or Nigel Spackman in the middle.

He won another league championship with the Reds in 1990 as well as two FA Cups in 1989 and 1992. The latter season – his last at the club – saw him score a career-best 12 goals.



JASON McATEER

RIGHT MIDFIELD 1995-1999; LFC apps 139; Republic of Ireland caps 52

A boyhood Red, his dream came true when he signed for Liverpool from Bolton Wanderers, turning down an offer from reigning Premier League champions Blackburn Rovers to do so.

In three seasons playing mainly as a central midfielder, he'd helped Bolton into the Premier League and performed well for Ireland at the 1994 World Cup.

At Anfield he was deployed mainly as an attacking right wing-back, delivering dangerous crosses into the penalty area and offering plenty of energy.

So tireless was his running that he would no doubt have thrived in the current Liverpool team with Jürgen Klopp's high-pressing philosophy.

After suffering a broken leg in a game at Blackburn in January 1998, he failed to convince new manager Gerard Houllier and was sold in 1999, finally making that move to Blackburn.

His international highlight was undoubtedly scoring the winner against Holland at Lansdowne Road in September 2001 to put the Irish on course for qualification for the 2002 World Cup.

"The Dutch had already booked their hotels in Japan and Korea so it was lovely to wipe the smiles off their faces – absolutely fantastic time," he later recalled.



RONNIE WHELAN

CENTRE MIDFIELD 1981-1993; LFC apps 493; Republic of Ireland caps 53

"When those special matches come round and there are medals to be won and the pundits are asking whether the match winner will be Rushie or Kenny or Brucie, then I look past them all towards Ronnie Whelan and think to myself: There's our man for the big occasion."

The words of legendary Liverpool manager Bob Paisley and you can pay no greater compliment than that.

A mainstay of the Liverpool side for more than a decade, Whelan started off as a left-sided midfielder whose skill-set later allowed him to become a key player in the centre of the field.



His Liverpool highlights reel is extensive but among the picks were crucial goals in League Cup wins over Tottenham and Manchester United in 1982 and 1983 respectively, as well as another goal against Spurs which effectively secured the league title in 1982. That was the first of six championships he would win with the Reds, along with a European Cup, two FA Cups and three League Cups.What a player!

On the international stage Ronnie scored a spectacular goal in a 1-1 draw against the USSR in Hanover at the 1988 Euros and won more than 50 caps.

JOHN ALDRIDGE

FORWARD 1987-1989; LFC apps 104; ROI caps 69

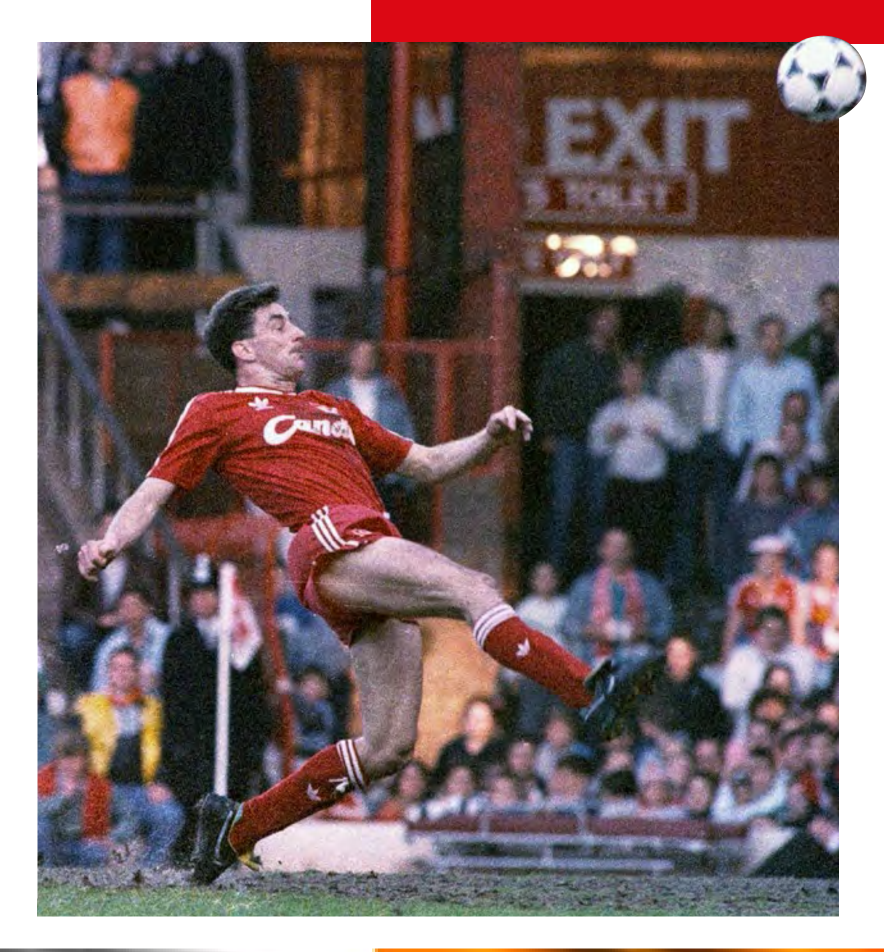
Lifelong fan Aldridge jumped at the chance to join the Reds after Ian Rush opted for a new challenge at Juventus.

Alongside John Barnes and Peter Beardsley, he spearheaded the attack to devastating effect, scoring in each of the first nine league matches of the 1987/88 season. Having also scored in the final league game of the previous campaign, his club record of scoring in 10 consecutive league games still stands.

After helping the Reds romp to the title, Aldo became the first player to miss a penalty in an FA Cup final at Wembley when he was denied by Wimbledon keeper Dave Beasant. He made amends a year later when he scored with his first touch against Everton as Liverpool defeated their neighbours 3-2 after extra-time. Aldridge scored 31 goals that season.

However, when manager Kenny Dalglish brought Rush back to Liverpool, regular game-time proved elusive for the local lad and he made an emotional scoring farewell when he came off the bench to net a penalty at the Kop end in the 9-0 rout of Crystal Palace in September 1989.

John represented the Republic of Ireland between 1986 and 1996, qualifying through his grandmother. He scored 19 times in the green-and-white, although his most memorable moment probably came as a substitute at the 1994 World Cup against Mexico when he yelled at officials who made him wait six minutes to replace an injured player who had already left the pitch!



STEVE HEIGHWAY

LEFT WINGER 1970-1981; LFC apps 475; Republic of Ireland caps 34

The flying winger starred for the Reds in their European Cup triumphs of 1977 and 1978 before returning to LFC to serve the club with distinction in his role as Academy director.

His name still rings out around the ground on a matchday as part of the lyrics to *The Fields of Anfield Road*: 'Stevie Heighway on the wing, we had dreams and songs to sing...'

It is a surprise that he played only 34 times for the Republic having become a regular at Anfield under Bill Shankly and Bob Paisley after being snapped up from non-league Skelmersdale United.

A goalscorer in the 1971 FA Cup final against Arsenal at Wembley, his searing pace and the sight of him leaving many a full-back trailing in his wake will live long in the memory of those who followed the Reds throughout the Seventies.

ROBBIE KEANE

FORWARD 2008-2009; LFC apps 28;
Republic of Ireland caps 146

The Republic of Ireland's most-capped player of all-time, Keane spent the first half of the 2008/09 season at Anfield. Four of his 146 international games came while he was a Liverpool player.

Robbie scored seven times in 28 appearances for the Reds before returning to former club Tottenham Hotspur having been unable to convince Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez.

Nonetheless, with 68 goals at international level also making him Ireland's leading goalscorer of all-time, he certainly knew where the back of the net was. His goals for the Reds included Champions League strikes against Atletico Madrid and PSV Eindhoven.

JOHN McKENNA

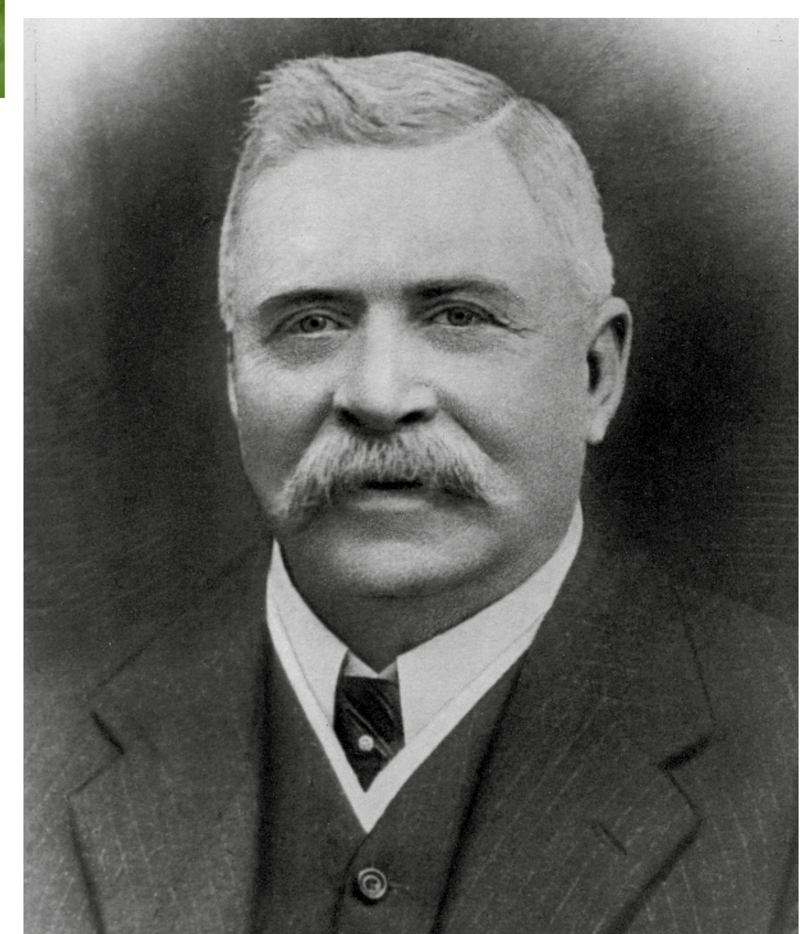
MANAGER 1895-96;
CHAIRMAN 1909-14 and 1917-19

McKenna was one of the most influential figures in the early history of Liverpool Football Club. A footballing pioneer and close friend of the club's founder John Houlding during their time together at Everton, he stayed loyal to Houlding and would be a key figure in Liverpool's early days.

Ambitious and forward-thinking, the Irishman held a prominent position within the boardroom and was viewed as the public face of the club.

Entrusted with the task of assembling Liverpool's first ever team, John shared the secretarial and managerial duties with his compatriot William Barclay until Tom Watson was appointed to look after team matters in 1896.

Born in Drumcaw, County Monaghan, he was also one of the game's great administrators and, following a season in the Lancashire League, instigated LFC's successful admission into the Football League.





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JOIN THE CLUB

From Sadio Mane to Luis Diaz, recalling when the 16 current senior players signed by Jürgen Klopp arrived at Anfield and made their first appearances in an LFC shirt


Expedia

SADIO MANE

Signed: 28 June 2016 from Southampton.
Debut: 14 Aug 2016 Arsenal 3 Liverpool 4 (Premier League).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "I have followed Sadio for a lot of years since his impressive performances in the Olympics in 2012 [with Senegal] and then watched his development in Austria and in his time at Southampton.

"Since I came here I have spoken to the staff a lot about him and have always felt he could be a very good signing for us. He has a lot of quality, works hard and has a very good goalscoring record.

"When I spoke to him I could tell that he was passionate about joining the club and playing for our fantastic fans. I think they will be just as excited about seeing him put on a Liverpool shirt as I am…

[After Mane's goalscoring debut at Arsenal] "Good, good, good, but he can do even better. We saw today that in specific moments he is unbelievably strong. Being technically good and quick is a nice combination, so that's what we saw in the game and around the goal."



JOEL MATIP

Signed: 1 July 2016 from Schalke 04.
Debut: 23 Aug 2016 Burton Albion 0 Liverpool 5 (League Cup).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "He wanted a new challenge and he's made big steps in his development in the last few years. He's become a really experienced centre-half – tall but flexible and quick. A perfect header of the ball, he scores four or five goals a season, and is good in the build-up.

"I know in England it is really difficult to sign a player without paying a transfer fee but I thought it cannot be a reason not to take him only because you cannot put a number behind his name. If you asked in Germany what other clubs would've paid for him had he still been under contract, you can just pick a number.

"There are probably only three or four clubs in Germany who could get Matip when he is at Schalke. The rest, no chance. We moved early enough [and] he can be a really good centre-half in the Premier League."





MOHAMED SALAH

Signed: 22 June 2017 from AS Roma.
LFC debut: 12 Aug 2017 Watford 3 Liverpool 3 (Premier League).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "Mohamed has the perfect mix of experience and potential – this is a really exciting signing for us. He knows the Premier League, he has pedigree in the Champions League and he is one of the most important players for his country. His record in Italy has been outstanding and he possesses qualities that will enhance our team and squad. His pace is incredible, he gives us more attacking threat and we are already strong in this area.

"Most important for us, though, is that he is hungry, willing and eager to be even better. He believes in what we are trying to do here at Liverpool and is extremely keen to be part of it. He is very excited about performing for our wonderful supporters. He is an ambitious player who wants to win and win at the highest level – and he knows he can fulfil those ambitions with Liverpool…

"[Against Watford on his debut] he was involved in the penalty, scoring a goal, even though it was for sure not the most difficult goal of his life because it was a perfect ball from Dejan [Lovren], fantastic control from Roberto [Firmino], a sensational chip, and then he's there to finish the situation, which is nice. In the beginning everyone could see he struggled a bit against [Jose] Holebas, a really strong man, and he was a little bit too much on the wing, things like this. We spoke about it at half-time and second half was much better.

"So yes, I am fine with his contribution."

ANDY ROBERTSON

Signed: 21 July 2017 from Hull City.
Debut: 19 Aug 2017 Liverpool 1 Crystal Palace 0 (Premier League).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "For Andrew this is another big step on what has been a quite incredible personal journey in a very short space of time. I love his story, where he has come from professionally to reach this point.

"When you speak to him it is clear why he makes his progress. He has a burning love for playing football – he really loves the game. His attitude is absolutely outstanding. His talent and skills, also very, very good.

"He has experience of this competition, the Premier League, and he has the mentality and quality to get even better. I know our environment will benefit him and help him push himself even more than he has already. This is a player who does not limit his ambition, I think…

[Three months later when Robbo had only made three starts] "Andrew has had a little less rhythm, so you think: okay, now he will have a game with the national team and come back. We will have a little internal game then and that's good for Andy.

"So he's on a good way. It's going well apart from maybe he is not happy he cannot start so often as he would've thought from the beginning. But it's all about improvement and then to be ready for the moment you are used."



ALEX OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN

Signed: 31 Aug 2017 from Arsenal.
Debut: 9 Sept 2017 (sub) Man City 5 Liverpool 0 (Premier League); 19 Sept 2017 (full) Leicester City 2 Liverpool 0 (League Cup).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "I hear a lot of talk about positions but let's talk about the player. He is someone with really good abilities who always gives everything for his team. A player that is positive and willing to take risks to try and make positive things happen.

"He may still be young but he has a lot of experience in the Premier League, Champions League and for his country. Already he is a very, very good player and I think he has the mentality and desire to get even better – and that excites me.

"This is someone making a tough decision to leave one great club and come to another great club and I think he had many options, so to get him means I am delighted. He didn't make an easy decision but I think he made a great one to go on this journey with this squad of talented boys and our great supporters."

VIRGIL VAN DIJK

Signed: 1 Jan 2018 from Southampton.
Debut: 5 Jan 2018 Liverpool 2 Everton 1 (FA Cup).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "I can imagine people think: wow, what a number this is [the transfer fee]. But of course for me this is not interesting. We don't make the prices, the market makes the prices and the first thing all Liverpool supporters should forget is the price.

"We only talk about the player and what he can bring. It's quality, it's character, it's mentality and all that stuff. That's why we are really happy.

"It's a long-term thing. He had probably not his best half-a-season in Southampton, he was very long injured [ankle] and then we all know about the things that happened last summer [LFC's original interest in signing him].

"He's a tall player – they always need a little bit longer, especially after nine months or so. So he needs rhythm but that's not a problem because we don't have to rush anything. He needs to adapt to our style of play, it's completely different, but we are 100 per cent sure he will do it. I am very happy about the fact it's finally done, but otherwise there's no rush…

[After VVD's debut goal in the FA Cup third-round derby at Anfield] "It was nice that Virgil could score in his first game, a brilliant header. I am really happy. In front of the Kop makes it even better."





FABINHO

Signed: 1 July 2018 from AS Monaco.
Debut: 18 Sept 2018 (sub) Liverpool 3 PSG 2 (Champions League); 26 Sept 2018 (full) Liverpool 1 Chelsea 2 (League Cup).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "We have signed a fantastic player but someone who is an equally fantastic person, I think. His reputation as a character in the dressing room and his attitude in training has come through from everyone we speak to. He has a lovely family also.

"Adding a person like this only makes us even stronger. What we have – in terms of our environment and in the team – means anyone coming in must be of that build, the highest quality person and player.

"He has ability and mentality to play in a number of positions. He can play '6', '8' and '2'. This is cool. He's tactically very strong and football-smart. He improves our squad and there aren't that many players you can say that about in this moment, because the quality we have already is so high. Also, international caps for Brazil tells you something about him.



"This signing gives us new opportunities and for that I am excited. I'm sure our supporters will make him very welcome and at home at our wonderful club and in our amazing city."

NABY KEITA

Signed: 1 July 2018 from RB Leipzig.
Debut: 12 Aug 2018 Liverpool 4 West Ham United 0 (Premier League).

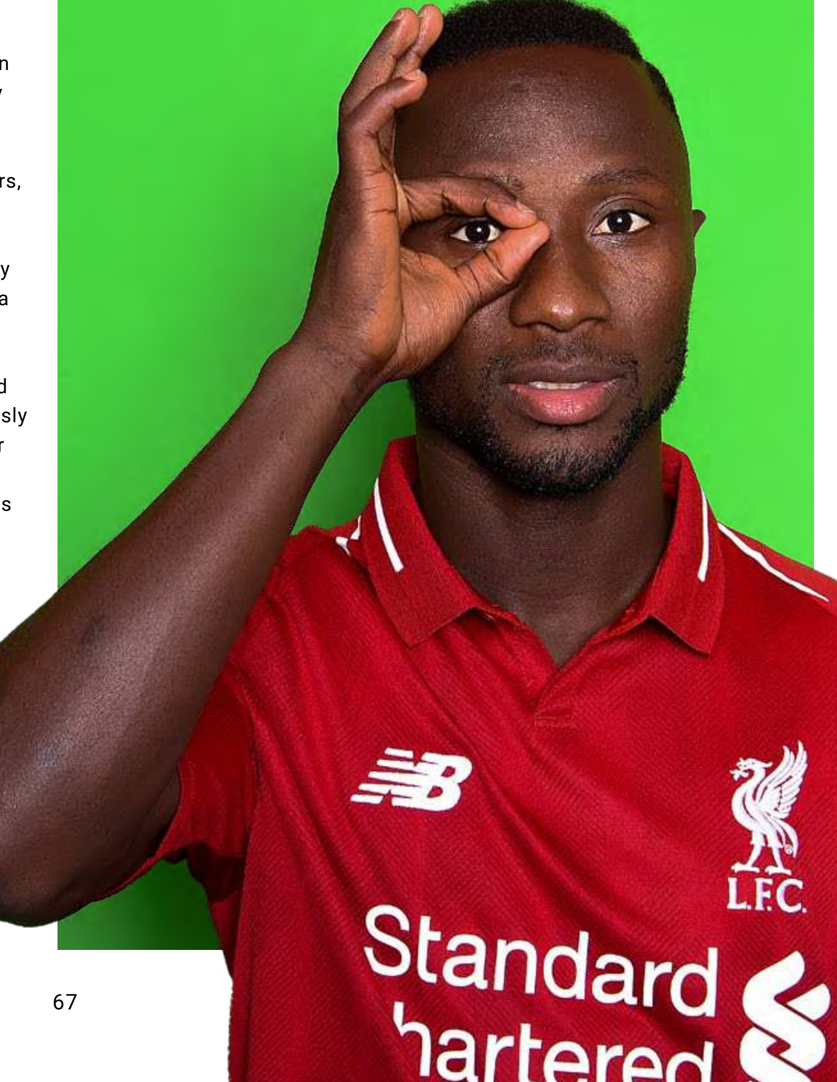
JÜRGEN KLOPP: "Naby, we all have no clue how good he can be. He's too young to judge him. What can we say? Obviously he learned very quickly already in the last few years, from Austria to Leipzig, now here. So he adapts constantly and brings himself to the next level. He adapts to the other players, uses them really well.

"I don't want to make it too big – it's just that I don't know. If you asked me what his greatest strength was, I couldn't say it really. It's not because he's not long enough here. But he's a very smart footballer…

[After Naby's debut against West Ham] "Absolutely a good performance, of course. Naby is in because he's a really good footballer and I've said it from the beginning that he's obviously settled really quick and has a similar style of play in a similar position as he did at Leipzig.

"He can play different positions of course, but I think no8 is his best in the moment, so that's all cool."





ALISSON

Signed: 19 July 2018.
Debut: 12 Aug 2018 Liverpool 4 West Ham United 0 (Premier League).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "At one point in the last few weeks it came up, the opportunity to sign one of the world's best goalkeepers. Then it's not a long thought, to be honest. It's only that you need to have a little talk with the owners! They were quite excited, so we did it.

"I think it's something we have to do. He has nothing to do with the price, we have nothing to do with the price – it's the market, that's how it is and we will not think a lot about it. It shows the value of goalkeepers, of course, in this moment. It will happen a lot in the next few weeks I guess, so we are really happy to have him here.

"His English is surprisingly good and he is a real personality. He has meanwhile a lot of experience in the last few years, in Europe and in Rome. He's played there at an outstandingly high level and he did the same at the World Cup.

"He needs to adapt to the English Premier League, that's how it is. The league is different, the refs are different, the goalkeeper life is different in the Premier League. But that's not important now because again, we got him here because of his existing strengths, which are in all goalkeeper departments the highest level.

"But of course he still has to adapt and age-wise he can improve. The best years are coming in the goalkeeper life, so it's all good."



HARVEY ELLIOTT

Signed: 28 July 2019 from Fulham.
Debut: 25 Sept 2019 MK Dons 0 Liverpool 2 (League Cup).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: [After Elliott signed his first professional contract a year later] "Brilliant news – really happy. Harvey is such an exciting prospect. We all know his qualities – we have seen them this season in the first team and Under-23s.

"I love his attitude, love his enthusiasm, love his bravery, love the fact he has the right amount of football confidence and cheekiness. The public maybe doesn't know the real Harvey yet and part of that is because we have looked to shield and protect him. But he is such a nice, polite, humble boy who just loves football, would play every minute of every day if he could. And he loves this club also and that's a nice mixture.

"What is critical, so important, is that he is given time and space to develop. He will get that from us. He needs to be allowed to make mistakes while he learns and not feel more pressure than is right and fair.

"What is great is that he has the perfect culture here and we will protect him. The senior players and the coaches really care about him and are as excited as I am about his future. We will all be part of his story as it unfolds."





TAKUMI MINAMINO

Signed: 1 Jan 2020 from RB Salzburg.
Debut: 5 Jan 2020 Liverpool 1 Everton 0 (FA Cup).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "This is fabulous news – a wonderful signing. We are really, really happy about this. Our supporters have had the chance to see him close-up recently [for Salzburg v Liverpool] so I don't need to sing too loudly about his qualities as they are already known.

"Takumi is a very quick, very clever player, he finds space between the lines. He's brave with the ball but also brave without the ball – a proper team player. He makes the best of himself for the benefit of others.

"His Champions League experience is a big bonus and coming from the club and organisation he does, we know he'll be well-coached, used to an elite environment and had all the right experiences.

"I'm sure all the Liverpool supporters will go out of their way to make Takumi feel at home. I'm also pretty sure we have added to our numbers in the LFC family in Japan.

"For those who follow us now because we have one of the country's most exciting talents, I say welcome – it's a special club to be part of."

KOSTAS TSIMIKAS

Signed: 10 Aug 2020 from Olympiacos.
Debut: 24 Sept 2020 Lincoln City 2 Liverpool 7 (League Cup).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "We have watched Kostas for a long time and are really happy that he has joined us. He is a very good footballer with an attitude to win and to compete, and I really like his mentality. It fits perfectly with the mood and the desire we have in our dressing room already.

"He has shown already at a young age he can experience football in a different country and do well – and he has been a big part of the success Olympiacos has had to win their title this season and in their European campaigns.

"Kostas knows from personal experience what is required to challenge and succeed domestically and in the Champions League, and he is ambitious for more – just like us. He has come up against some very tough opponents in the past couple of seasons and done well and we know he relishes the challenge, which is perfect for us. I'm so pleased."



THIAGO ALCANTARA

Signed: 18 Sept 2020 from Bayern Munich.
Debut: 20 Sept 2020 (sub) Chelsea 0 Liverpool 2 (Premier League); 17 Oct 2020 (full) Everton 2 Liverpool 2 (Premier League).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "To write the next chapter we have to create a new story, and for a new story you need new actors as well. But we don't go for some actors just to have different guys – we want to have the right guys and then everything is fine.

"He can demand rhythm, that's how it is. He can create and use space for other players. First touch incredible. Vision incredible. Passing pretty good! Quick as well. Work-rate great.

"His numbers were absolutely special last year in Germany as well: most steals, ball-recoveries and all these kinds of things. But we don't play like Bayern, so he will need some time to get settled and nobody should expect – and I don't expect – the special things immediately. First game, let's see…

[Following Thiago's introduction as a sub against 10-man Chelsea] "We came in and Hendo said he had picked up a knock but wanted to carry on, but we said no as we don't take any risks and then we made the decision for Thiago. Because even without training, against ten men, he is pretty much the perfect player on that pitch I would say.

"Everything he did today was completely natural, so it was all good. Nice."



DIOGO JOTA

Signed: 19 Sept 2020 from Wolverhampton Wanderers.
Debut: 24 Sept 2020 (sub) Lincoln City 2 Liverpool 7 (League Cup); 1 Oct 2020 (full) Liverpool 0 Arsenal 0 (4-5 pens) (League Cup).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "He's 23 years old, still far away from being kind of a finished article, so much potential. He has the speed, can combine, can defend, can press. It makes it just more unpredictable and gives us real options for different systems because he can play pretty much all three positions upfront in a 4-3-3. If we play with four midfielders he can play both wings. So these kinds of things. It's just nice.

"And he has some natural things which we have in our game, like this desire and the greed and the direction. He is part of this unbelievable Portuguese generation in the moment, where they have really a lot of obviously quite skilled players…

[After Jota scored as a sub on his Anfield debut against Arsenal in the Premier League] "Diogo came on, played naturally his football, tried to defend the way we defend. He is on 20 per cent of information on what we do exactly – we had meetings to talk about it and that will all take time.

"Today he had 60 or 70 minutes to watch how Sadio is doing and then he came on the pitch and did incredibly well. He scored a super goal, a nice first game at Anfield. He will never forget it. I will never forget it. A cool start."





IBRAHIMA KONATE

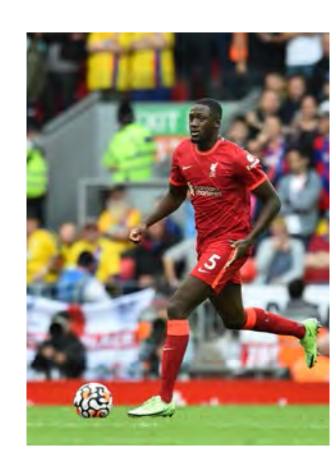
Signed: 1 July 2021 from RB Leipzig.
Debut: 18 Sept 2021 Liverpool 3 Crystal Palace 0 (Premier League).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "He is someone I've admired for a long time, ever since I first became aware of his potential when he was at Sochaux. In Ibrahima we are signing a player who will add to the quality we already have here. His physical attributes are very impressive: he is quick, he is very strong and he is dominant in the air.

"I am confident we are signing a player who can play for us right away, but he is a boy of 22 years of age who has room to improve. I know that's something he is eager to work on with us to become an even better player…

"You can see he is incredibly talented. He is used to winning challenges easy and he did really well [against Palace]. He will get better. Today against [Christian] Benteke and [Odsonne] Edouard and [Wilfried] Zaha, there were situations where it is new for him.

"So, step-by-step."



LUIS DIAZ

Signed: 30 Jan 2022 from FC Porto.
Debut: 6 Feb 2022 (sub) Liverpool 3 Cardiff City 1 (FA Cup); 10 Feb 2022 (full) Liverpool 2 Leicester City 0 (Premier League).

JÜRGEN KLOPP: "It was his first [full] game [against Leicester City] and it was probably one of the best I ever saw from a new player – that's true – because he looked completely natural. But we have to see how he adapts to working with intensity and all these kind of things in the Premier League. There is no rush.

"I am 100 per cent sure that a year later [from the date he'd joined Liverpool] Diogo Jota would have had offers from other top clubs. It is similar to Mo – if he had played another season at Roma in the same manner then there probably would've been other clubs in for him as well. So it is about timing, it's about what you need at that moment.

"But for all the players it is the same: the most important thing for a transfer working is that the team they join is in a good place. It helps massively that it is a settled team so the new signing doesn't have to come in and change the world on his first day. And that was never the case since I have been here.

"Our transfers have to hit the ground [running] because we can't make a £40m or £50m signing and say that if they are not playing then that is not important.

"As we say in Germany, it is not that we swim in money. It's a wealthy club – there are no problems here – but the policy is clear: we spend what we earn. It is very important that we have to do absolutely the right thing."



"I'D DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN"

Jon Newby made a handful of appearances for Liverpool before his footballing career took him far and wide – he wouldn't swap a moment and his new book tells the whole story

WHY DID YOU WANT TO PUT THE BOOK TOGETHER?

To be honest, I wrote it initially for my children to read because they were too young to see me play. I had a couple of family members who read it and they thought it was good and maybe worth trying to get published and fortunately Pitch Publishing wanted to do that.

I think my book's slightly different from those you read by the superstars. I love reading their books and I know how good they are from playing and training with world-class players earlier in my career, but I feel my story's the other side of things.

It's the not knowing where the next contract is coming from sometimes. I just think it's got a slightly different angle to it.

It got to the stage in my career where I was essentially a journeyman player in the lower leagues trying to make a living in the game. There are a lot of players out there and so there's certainly no shame in that. We all earn a good living doing something that we love. I'm sure if we could all go back and start again, we certainly would – I know I would.

I have seen every side of it from the Premier League all the way down to the next eight levels of English football so it's certainly been interesting.

YOU STARTED OFF AT LIVERPOOL AS A NINE-YEAR-OLD AND WENT ON TO ACHIEVE YOUR DREAM OF PLAYING FOR THE FIRST-TEAM...

It was an unbelievable education. Liverpool's always a club with certain standards, whether you're a nine-year-old starting off there or whether you're a 30-year-old in the first team. There are certain standards and an integrity that you've got to have to play for Liverpool and that was instilled in us very, very early on from Steve Heighway, Hugh McAuley and Dave Shannon, who were our coaches.

Every year it got that little bit harder to stay at Liverpool, which is what you expect when you're trying to get to the first-team. It was an unbelievable experience to train and play alongside world-class players every day. Robbie Fowler, Steven Gerrard, Jamie Carragher, Michael Owen...I was training alongside them every day so I couldn't help but improve and progress. It was a fantastic experience.

I eventually made my Premier League debut against Middlesbrough [as a sub for Vladimir Smicer in January 2000] but a few months earlier I came on against Hull City in a League Cup tie at Anfield and set up a farewell goal for Karl-Heinz Riedle.

My transition from supporter to player was quite difficult. I was going from standing on the Kop every week and travelling to watch the first-team away at Wimbledon or Southampton on a Tuesday night to all of a sudden training and playing alongside them. To play a part in those games and play a part in a first-team goal was unbelievable.

To say that you played for your boyhood team in the Premier League at Anfield is fantastic but there were probably other parts of my career which I enjoyed more. That's because I was always on the fringes of the first-team at Liverpool whereas I went to Bury and I think I played something like 117 consecutive games. That is something that I'm really proud of and something which doesn't happen often these days.

I'd have loved to have played in the Premier League for longer. Of course I would – anyone would. But I enjoyed my career and having the opportunities to play football at a professional level every day was brilliant.

BEFORE YOU LEFT LIVERPOOL ON A PERMANENT BASIS IN 2001, YOU HAD A FEW LOAN-SPELLS – HOW IMPORTANT WERE THEY?

Going on loan was brilliant. I really enjoyed it. I went to Crewe for a month and then to Sheffield United for three months before a month at Bury. They were invaluable times for me because I was at a stage where I needed to play first-team football, basically to see if I was going to be good enough to have a career in the game. So to work with the managers that I worked with, the likes of Neil Warnock, was very, very different.

Once you've worked with Neil Warnock, you've probably experienced everything in three months that you're going to experience in football. And he was absolutely brilliant. So I found the loan-spells so important. I found them tough as well but they were just what I needed at that stage of my career.

It was important to see how things worked away from Liverpool. It's one of the biggest clubs in the world and when you're a young lad you know that at some stage of your career you're going to have to forge a career away from Liverpool, so to just go and get those other experiences was invaluable.

IN THE BOOK YOU WRITE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES AS PLAYER-MANAGER OF COLWYN BAY IN THE CONFERENCE NORTH...

Obviously it's a long way from managing a Premier League club! You're called a manager but you've probably got about 24 other jobs that you're doing at the same time. It was difficult, but it was something that, for large parts of it, I loved.

I live and breathe football and in that role I was totally immersed in it. It's very, very different to being a player where you're kind of concentrating on yourself, but once you become a manager, you're concentrating on everyone else and everything else. It was good while it lasted but it was certainly tough.

Words: William Hughes


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YOU ALSO DISCUSS ISSUES SUCH AS CONFIDENCE AND THEN BEING DIAGNOSED WITH A HEART CONDITION LATER IN YOUR CAREER...

I was always a confidence player. One of those who felt that when I was playing well, I could play against anyone. When I wasn't, I found it difficult. A lot of the time that's what separates the great players from the good players. Confidence issues were something I struggled with throughout my career. And then towards the end of my career I was playing non-league and I would have sudden collapses when I was playing. I was eventually diagnosed with a heart condition and I've now got an internal defibrillator fitted. That's been a tough adjustment, going from training at high intensity every day to now not being able to do an awful lot in terms of exercise.

YOU HAVE BEEN BACK AT LIVERPOOL'S ACADEMY FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW – HOW'S IT GOING?

I love it. I work full-time in young player recruitment, primarily for nine to 14-year-olds. I've been back at the Academy for seven years now and it's just a fantastic club to be a part of.

Liverpool is always going to be a club that wants to be at the top. That's what the club stands for: wanting to be the best but, at the same time, having certain standards and an integrity.

I started at Liverpool when I was nine years old and a lot of the boys now start younger. And for me at that age it was the same then as it is for the boys now. The biggest thing is just to enjoy your football, just go and play with a smile on your face, love the game and it can take you a long way. I was part of the set-up when construction of the Academy building at Kirkby was taking place. We had a spell of about five months before the Academy was built where we trained at Liverpool University so we were kind of 'in between'. So I was doing a couple of days a week at Melwood and a couple of days a week with the younger YTS boys as well. It was very different to how it is now.

It's nice when you see young players going on journeys, right from a really young age to then progressing to the first-team because I know what it takes to get there and I just hope that those boys can stay at the top for as long as possible.



THE BOOK IS CALLED 'ADDICTED TO FOOTBALL' AND YOU CLEARLY STILL ARE...

Yes and I think the reason why I'm still so in love with the game is because I've experienced so many different things in my career. Whether that's been at one of the biggest clubs in the world at Liverpool or whether it's been at a Colwyn Bay or a Morecambe, everything has been so, so different.

I've certainly never been bored in anything I've done throughout the last 20-odd years of my career.

Sometimes I think footballers wish they weren't so addicted to football as it would be a much easier, calmer and quieter life. But I think once you kick a ball as a youngster, you're kind of hooked aren't you?

WIN THE BOOK!

Jon came through the youth set-up at Liverpool and played in the FA Youth Cup winning team of 1996, scoring in the final at West Ham United. He made four senior appearances in 1999/2000, playing in the Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup.

After several loan-spells he wore the colours of Bury, Huddersfield Town, York City, Kidderminster Harriers, Wrexham, Southport, Morecambe, Greenock Morton, Burton Albion, Northwich Victoria, Colwyn Bay and Warrington Town. He played almost 300 Football League games during his career.

Jon also managed Colwyn Bay in the Conference North before joining the LFC Academy in 2014, working with the Under-9 and 12s before becoming head of U11s in 2017.

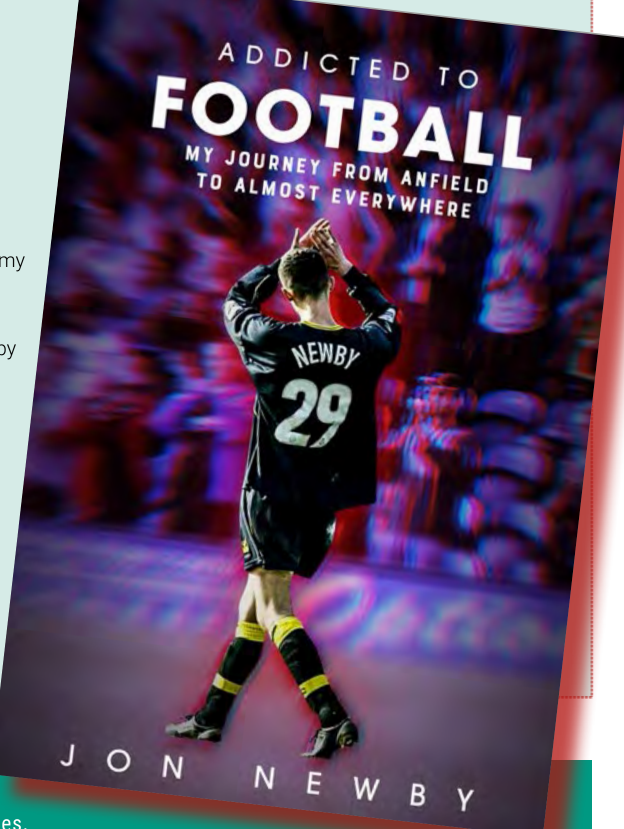
He's now the Manchester area scout for the nine to 13s age-groups.

Addicted to Football: My Journey From Anfield To Almost Everywhere is published by Pitch and on sale from 28 March.

We've got three copies to give away. To be in with a chance of winning one, simply answer the following question:

Who was Liverpool manager when Jon made his senior Reds debut in Sept 1999?

Email your answer, name, address and contact phone number with **'JON NEWBY BOOK COMPETITION'** in the subject line to liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com.
Closing date is Monday 11 April 2022. Normal competition rules apply and winners will receive prizes ASAP after the closing date.



ISSUE 112 COMPETITION WINNERS WERE:

JOHN BARNES BOOK:
Ian Kinnear, Stoke on Trent; Gary Haveron, Larne, Co Antrim; Leanne Dixon, Widnes.


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OUR GALWAY GIRL

Hail the centurion! Liverpool FC Women's captain Niamh Fahey reached a special landmark for the Republic of Ireland last month and here she reflects on a memorable season so far for club and country

Liverpool FC Women's captain Niamh Fahey enjoyed a milestone moment in her stellar career when she won her 100th cap for the Republic of Ireland. In doing so she became only the fourth woman to reach the century for her country.

She follows in the footsteps of a duo she played alongside earlier in her career at Arsenal, goalkeeper Emma Byrne and midfielder Ciara Grant, as well as former Doncaster Rovers Belles striker Aine O'Gorman.

Ahead of the game which saw her pull on the Ireland shirt for the 100th time – she captained her country in their 2-1 win against Poland at the Pinatar Cup in Alicante – Fahey received a special 'golden' cap which was presented by team manager Vera Pauw and FAI president Gerry McAnaney.

Niamh, whose background had been in playing Gaelic football, came through the ranks at the Salthill Devon club near her Galway home before helping Galway to glory in the 2007 FAI Cup when she scored the winner against Raheny United from the penalty spot.

In March of that year she'd been handed her international debut when she was named in the starting line-up for the Algarve Cup game against Portugal which ended in a 1-1 draw.

"I've played international football in three different decades now, which is frightening!" she says. "I remind the Liverpool girls of that when I tell them how old I am.

"I do remember my debut but I remember the tournament more because we were in the Algarve Cup and I remember being away rather than the actual build-up to my debut itself.

"I remember the nerves after getting the call-up to say I was starting the game. I remember being nervous when I was playing, but I had experienced colleagues around me to help me through.

"It was exciting but also a nerve-racking experience. That's always going to be the case when it's your first cap and your first time going away with the senior team.

Words: William Hughes



"It's been an absolute honour to represent my country and to win my 100th cap is huge. I am a passionate and a proud Irish woman so to pull on the green shirt for the 100th time was very special."

Niamh joined Liverpool from Bordeaux at the start of the 2018/19 season and assumed the captaincy in 2020/21.

She has become a fans' favourite and supporters often pay tribute to her with their chant of 'She is red, she is green, number five in our team, in midfield or back three, Niamh Fa-hey!'

To put her achievement into context, she'd played 84 games for Liverpool as at the end of February.

"I didn't actually think I'd played that many games for Liverpool so that's interesting in itself!" she says. "I had a couple of years with Ireland where I had an unfortunate couple of injuries and stuff like that, so to still be at international level and still be picked for the squads throughout my career is something that I am proud of and something that I never take for granted.

"It's been a journey but one that I've absolutely loved every single minute of along the way.

"There's not many of us who have 100 caps because of the way the women's game has been. We never used to get together that much for international fixtures and tournaments, although now they're a lot more frequent.

"So for those other girls to have won 100 caps is even more phenomenal because it would have required a longer time period to achieve it. Emma, Ciara and Aine O'Gorman have been fantastic players and fantastic servants, so to join that band is another immensely proud achievement."

Members of Niamh's family made the trip to Spain to see her make her milestone appearance and she jokes that it was probably a good thing that the game took place in La Manga rather than Dublin.

"If it had been in Dublin, obviously more of my family would have been there but they were watching on and following the game in whatever way they could. Maybe it was better off not being in Dublin as there probably would have been too much of a party afterwards!"

Next on her to-do list is to try and help the Republic of Ireland women reach a World Cup for the first time. The team has yet to play in a major tournament finals but she hopes to emulate her Liverpool team-mate, vice-captain Rachel Furness, who helped the other girls in green, Northern Ireland, achieve that last year when they qualified for this summer's European Championships.

The Republic are currently well-placed to reach a play-off for the World Cup – which will take place in Australia and New Zealand – as runners-up behind runaway group leaders Sweden.

"Yes, that's one that's eluded me and eluded the whole Irish national team for the last, however many years we've been going.

"It's a really tough group but we're right up there in the mix. We're in second at the moment and we've tough games coming up, especially in September with the crucial ones again against Slovakia and Finland.

"All we can do is take one game at a time but we've put ourselves in a really strong position. To qualify would be amazing and obviously it would be historic."

Joining Niamh in the Republic squad these days are Liverpool team-mates Megan Campbell and Leanne Kiernan.

"IT'S BEEN AN ABSOLUTE HONOUR TO REPRESENT MY COUNTRY AND TO WIN MY 100TH CAP IS HUGE. I AM A PASSIONATE AND A PROUD IRISH WOMAN SO TO PULL ON THE GREEN SHIRT FOR THE 100TH TIME WAS VERY SPECIAL"



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"It's fantastic for both Liverpool and Ireland to have a strong Irish connection," she says. "The club has always had strong Irish links and to be playing at Liverpool and representing the club is something we're all proud of.

"Leanne's having an amazing season [top scorer with 13 goals heading into March] and Megan has just got back in the national squad again and she's flying after her recent injury setback so all credit to her. She's shown an amazing strength of character to have to deal with what she's had and to perform at such a tough level.

"It's great to have them both back in and around the squad and for us to be flying the flag on both sides."

In terms of Liverpool, this month will be key if Niamh is to end the season by lifting the FA Women's Championship trophy and celebrate leading the Reds back into the FA Women's Super League.

"We've had a good season but we will continue to take it one game at a time and try to tick the games off. We're keeping our feet on the ground and we know we haven't won anything yet.

"We were ten points clear going into March but with tough away games against London City and Charlton, the teams immediately behind us, before we play at home to Durham at the end of the month.

"Everyone in the squad has played their part and we have a great group of girls.

"The gaffer [Matt Beard] has been unbelievable since he's come in. He's really unified everybody around the whole club: staff, players and everyone external to that. He's quick to deflect the praise and attention away from himself but that's a mark of the man he is.

"I was delighted that he was named as the Championship's manager of the month for January and he deserves his recognition."



"AN **ABSOLUTE** GEM"

Megan Campbell (Liverpool and Republic of Ireland team-mate): "Niamh's fantastic, both as a person and as a player. All the teams that she's gone to, she's been successful at – it's a credit to her and her work on and off the pitch.

"For the international team she's been incredible. She was definitely a role-model for me when I was growing up. She was playing at Arsenal at the time and I wanted to come here and play in England and to be able to see the likes of Niamh Fahey playing 'across the water' spurred me on to be able to achieve those things.

"I know for definite she's encouraging a lot of other young girls and even boys to get involved in football and hopefully one day they'll be in her shoes.

"It's an incredible achievement for her to reach 100 caps. She's worked so hard and tirelessly for the national team as a whole behind the scenes and she's done great things to be able to push women's football forward in Ireland, both domestically and internationally."

Rachael Laws (Liverpool goalkeeper): "When I joined Liverpool again at the start of last season, Niamh was the first to welcome me with open arms and I'll never forget that.

"Week in, week out on and off the pitch, you can see that she's the ultimate pro. She performs on the pitch, she's good off it and she hasn't got the captain's armband for nothing. She's always someone you can go to and speak to if you've got any sort of problems. That's a credit to her not as a captain and a player but as a person.

"She looks after herself so well and that again is not just on the pitch and in the gym but off it as well. It's such a big milestone and you don't really see it often in women's football and that's credit to Niamh and the player she is.

"She's a top player but an even better person – any player in the squad would say the same thing. I can't speak highly enough of her – she's an absolute gem."

A TEAM THAT PLAYS THE LIVERPOOL WAY

Words: Chris McLoughlin

Luis Diaz arrived for his first day at a new school on 4 February. He'd been on half-term in Colombia, playing a bit of footy with the lads, and after a trip to Paris with the family to sort out a bit of paperwork he could now meet his new classmates in Kirkby.

He was given his own locker, provided with new Nike uniforms in different colours and soon discovered that his head teacher was so pleased to have a new pupil that he wouldn't be getting the weekend off.

"I wouldn't say no because I would be excited as well," said Jürgen Klopp when asked if he was going to give Diaz a debut against Cardiff City in the FA Cup 48 hours later. "But give me a second to meet him and ask him how his last two or three days were.

"If he's done his homework and puts an apple on my desk he might get a game."

Okay, so that last sentence is made up, but seeing the Liverpool manager so made up to have Diaz at the club gave off such a positive vibe. The new boy wasn't asking for six months to settle in either.

"I'm committed to being available from today, the very first day I've arrived," he told liverpoolfc.com. "I've already trained a bit today, I was out on the pitch and then in the gymnasium. So yes, my mindset is that I'm ready to help out my team and do my bit."

Sadio Mane and Mo Salah were still doing their bit at AFCON and after Senegal and Egypt won their semi-finals – Sadio scoring against Burkina Faso and Mo's Pharaohs beating hosts Cameroon on penalties – the pair now had to face each other in the final. Which is awkward when you want both to win.

"I'm really proud of them to be honest," said Klopp in full dad mode. "It's difficult obviously to get that far in a tournament, the pressure. They are the superstars so the pressure they had on their shoulders was massive. Naby played an exceptional tournament as well, so a really successful tournament for our boys."

The FA Cup could yet be a really successful tournament for all of our boys as despite the match kicking off at 12noon on a Sunday – about the time Mathew Street is winding down on a Saturday night – the Reds got the job done, albeit in the second half.

Despite having so much possession (82 per cent) before the interval that Cardiff must have considered filing a half-time court application to get access to the ball, Liverpool couldn't find a way through. Finally, it was Diogo Jota who broke the deadlock in the 53rd minute with a glancing header, Trent Alexander-Arnold getting his 15th assist of the season, before a feel-good 58th minute saw Diaz come on for his debut and Harvey Elliott make his long-awaited return from injury. Both received rapturous receptions and both made their marks.

Diaz, wearing short sleeves and gloves a la John Barnes, tackled Perry Ng in front of the Kop, produced a





flash of skill to keep the ball in play and pulled it back to Takumi Minamino to fire home. What a start for the new lad.

Elliott then flicked up Andy Robertson's cross and volleyed it into the Bluebirds' net for his first Liverpool goal. "It's a moment that myself and my family will remember," he told ITV. "This is what I'm in the team to do: score and assist. Thankfully it's come today in front of the crowd after having a long time out."

Cardiff got one back, but the Reds went through and with the fifth round draw having already taken place that morning, Liverpool's Auto Cup Scheme computer was putting in for overtime as another home game, this time against Norwich City, awaited.

The Africa Cup of Nations final that night was must-watch, especially when Senegal got an early penalty and Mo gave Egypt's goalie tips on which way he thought Sadio would place his spot-kick. Mane went straight down the middle and his penalty was saved. But it would be Sadio's night as after a 0-0 draw it went to penalties and he showed nerves of steel to convert Senegal's clincher. The party in Dakar went on for days and Mane was named as player of the tournament. Mo looked distraught.

It was little consolation but Salah arrived back on Merseyside to discover his strike at Chelsea had been named as Liverpool's goal of the month for January. There was also news from the Academy: U18s skipper Luca Stephenson had signed a new long-term contract. Could be shrewd business, that.







Ahead of the Premier League restart after a mini-winter break in which plenty of the lads went to sunnier climes and Kostas Tsimikas went fishing, the 'Greek Scouser' reflected on his first 18 months at Anfield in the Liverpool v Leicester matchday programme.

"I've learned to work harder and obviously in the positions here you have the best in the world," he said. "I have to challenge Robbo and trying to catch the best gives me an extra boost to be the best." He's certainly giving the manager something to think about now, but Robbo was back to face the Foxes.

They had beaten Liverpool in December after almost winning at Anfield in the Carabao Cup but weren't getting anything this time. Diaz made his first start, Trent made his 150th league appearance, Salah made the bench and Thiago made James Maddison go for an Echo with one piece of skill, but this was the night when Jota made his name ring around Anfield.

For the tenth time this season, Dio-goal opened the scoring, firing in the rebound after Virgil van Dijk's header was saved. He then sealed a 2-0 win against Brendan Rodgers' team, who strangely pumped long balls forward instead of trying to play from the back, when he slotted home after Joel Matip nutmegged Wilfred Ndidi.



Quite how Salah didn't score when he came on – the crossbar and Kasper Schmiechel both denied him after his name rang out as loud as ever in a post-AFCON show of support – is a mystery. But it was the lad from Portugal (better than Figo, don't you know?) who was the match-winner.

In the days that followed, news emerged that a contract extension for 36-year-old James Milner could be on the cards. "I am in talks, the club is in talks with Millie, we will see," said Klopp when asked about the reports.

"There's no chance Millie will retire next year, he is desperate to play on. And I understand it, to be honest, because life after careers – when you are lucky enough to stay healthy – are much longer than your career, so you should extend your career as long as you can."

Milner is so fit half the Liverpool Legends team (got your ticket for the Barcelona game yet?) will probably be younger than him when he finally retires, but a strange thing happened ahead of Burnley v Liverpool. You might need to sit down for this. Ready?

Klopp had a fully-fit squad to pick from. No injuries. No COVID. No nothing. Honestly. Indeed it was Klopp himself who was in the most danger of getting injured.

During the pre-match interviews at Turf Moor the advertising boards that provide the backdrop were almost blown upon the Reds boss as the rain lashed down and the wind howled around. Storms Dudley and Eunice were on their way, but this was just a standard Sunday in East Lancashire so Liverpool had to batten down the hatches to dig out three points in atrocious conditions.

Mane returned, Alisson had to save a wind-assisted Josh Brownhill shot and Salah had a penalty shout more stonewall than the local field boundaries turned down, before Fabinho got the only goal just before half-time. PFA fans player of the month, Alexander-Arnold, won a battle with the corner flag – which was angled like a javelin due to the gusts of wind – and clipped a dead-ball in for Mane to flick on and the onrushing Fabinho scored at the second attempt.

"I was alive inside the box," said Fab afterwards with





a smile, yet the narrative from this game was all about how often Burnley got behind Liverpool's high defensive line and were unlucky, which conveniently ignored the reality that the offside flag belatedly went up seven times and most of their 'chances' were simply delayed offsides.

Still, everyone likes a good story in football and Liverpool had the opportunity to write another chapter in their European history when they returned to the San Siro to play Internazionale in the last 16 of the Champions League.

Having already beaten AC Milan in the Giuseppe Meazza, a win for the Reds would make them the first side to beat both Milan clubs in the San Siro in the same competition in the same season. And it was same again for the travelling Kop as they watched Salah score in a Liverpool win.

The Italian champions had the better of the first half, Hakan Calhanoglu hit the crossbar, but the longer the game went on the more you fancied Liverpool to sneak a goal. They got two. Roberto Firmino came on to score with a lovely glancing header from Robertson's corner and Salah added a second with a deflected effort. Inter failed to have a single shot on target.

It was a night Elliott will never forget – he made his Champions League debut and at 18 years and 318 days old became Liverpool's youngest player to start a match in the competition – but not one Jota will care to remember too fondly as he suffered an ankle injury.

After such a long injury-free spell – almost a whole week – Liverpool had to open the treatment room again as it later transpired that Firmino would also miss the rest of the month with a muscle injury.

The prolific Fabinho was named as Standard Chartered player of the month for January ahead of Norwich City's Premier League visit to Anfield while Liverpool received three nominations in the British LGBT Awards, a timely reminder that equality and inclusivity are very much part of the Liverpool Way.











Klopp brought in Tsimikas and Joe Gomez at full-back for the visit of the Canaries with Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain and Naby Keita in midfield and an exciting new attacking trio of Salah, Mane and Diaz up front.

It took the Reds time to adjust and when Milot Rashica's shot deflected in off Matip in the 48th minute a few nerves started to jangle. But the arrivals of Thiago and Divock Origi off the bench – and a switch to a rarely used 4-4-2 – was too much for Delia/Dean Smith's team to handle.

Tsimikas headed Jordan Henderson's pass across for Mane to score with a spectacular bicycle-kick before Alisson and Salah evoked memories of Man United 2020 when Ali's long pass found the Egyptian King and after turning away from Norwich keeper Angus Gunn, he wrong-footed Kenny McLean on the goal-line when he rolled the ball in from the edge of the box for his 150th LFC goal. Some tally, that.

Anfield was still abuzz when Diaz scored the first of what will be many Liverpool goals when he completed a move spanning 34 passes with a cute finish over Gunn into the Kop-end net, sparking spontaneous chanting of his name to the old Luis Suarez song. It already feels like he could be as exciting as Suarez was in a red shirt.

The return of Gomez to a Premier League starting XI shouldn't go unnoticed either. Ain't nobody like Joe Gomez, but he had to wait one year and 103 days to start again for Liverpool in the top-flight after suffering a bad injury while on international duty with England.

"Obviously it's been a moment I've thought about for a long time," he told the club website. "I've had to wait longer than I would've hoped, but at the end of the day I've had to keep working and be the best member of the squad I can be, pushing the lads and doing my bit away from the pitch to try and be ready physically and mentally. So it does mean a lot."

His manager was keen to praise his attitude, too. "If I would be Joe Gomez, I would be really difficult to deal with in the situation because of the quality he has, because of the player he is," said the boss.

"Everybody likes, if not loves, Joey. With a pretty difficult injury and a few things afterwards – getting COVID in completely the wrong moment when we had an FA Cup game and these kinds of things – made it difficult for him to get rhythm. So I am really happy about the performance."

It's fair to say Kloppo was pretty happy with Liverpool's next performance too. Liverpool 6 Leeds United 0 and the manager celebrated at full-time with six fist-pumps in front of the Kop instead of three. Not only did the Reds win their game-in-hand to reduce the points deficit behind Manchester City to three, they also turned their comparative goal difference from a minus-2 disadvantage to a plus-4 advantage. Who knows how crucial that might prove to be?

Leeds had clearly come off the rails under Marcelo Bielsa, whose time at Elland Road would soon be up, but you've still got to be ruthless and Liverpool were.

Salah converted two first-half penalties, Mane netted twice in the last ten minutes and Van Dijk headed home with the last touch of the game to make it six, but the highlight of the night undoubtedly came in the 30th minute.

Joel Matip loves going on an adventure,



cruising forward from the back and beating men like a leggy Messi, yet he's never quite put the finishing touch to such a run. Tonight was the night he did. A surging run, a one-two with Salah and a superb finish almost saved the builders a job by taking the roof off the Annie Road end several months early.

"MATIP!" chanted the Kop to the St John/Dalglish/Fowler handclap, prompting smiles from both him and his biggest fan, Virgil. "I said to him already before the game I felt it coming because he had an assist for Diogo [against Leicester City]," said the big Dutchman. "I said, 'A goal is next!' so I'm obviously very happy for him."

It was the first time both Liverpool centre-backs had scored in the same league game at Anfield since Ron Yeats and Tommy Smith did the business against Leicester in 1968 and remarkably, in Liverpool's next game, both centre-backs would score penalties.

As did both full-backs. And the entire midfield. And all three strikers. And our goalie got the winner as it became red, red nine for Liverpool in the League Cup final at Wembley against Chelsea.

You can read this journey hunter's full account of our big day out at Wembley in the Carabao Cup Winners special magazine currently on sale, but the feeling of joy when Kepa Arrizabalaga sent his spot-kick in search of the moon was magnificent.

An exciting, yet sometimes scrappy, nerve-wracking nil-nil with four disallowed goals for offside and some important saves by both Caoimhin Kelleher and Edouard Mendy made for one cracking cup final, but all that truly mattered is that Liverpool won. And they were running round Wembley with the cup, making it a first domestic cup success since 2012 plus a fifth Hendo shuffle and trophy lift for the skipper.

It also meant that for the first time EVER, the Mighty Reds would head into March in genuine contention to win all four competitions – the mythical, never-before-achieved quadruple.

Can they do it? Only time will tell as the Reds have got some big rivals to overcome and history says it can't be done. But put it this way.

If I was the fella who has to update the Champions Walls at Anfield and the AXA Training Centre, I wouldn't be booking any time off in May just in case…

MAR/APR

WHAT'S ON





TOP TWO GO HEAD TO HEAD AT THE ETIHAD

The highlight of another busy month comes on Sunday 10 April 2022 when Liverpool head to Manchester City.

There is plenty of football to be played before the Reds make the trip to the Etihad Stadium, but Jürgen Klopp and his side will be hoping they will be in a position to dent City's advantage at the top of the table when the sides go head-to-head for the second time this season. Liverpool and City played out an entertaining 2-2 draw at Anfield back in October.

Before then they also have Premier League business to take care of at Brighton & Hove Albion on 12 March, at Arsenal on 16 March and at home to Watford on 2 April.

The Reds also have an FA Cup quarter-final at Nottingham Forest to look forward to on Sunday 20 March as well as a last-eight tie in the Champions League with the first leg to be played on 5 or 6 April. This magazine went to print before the draw on 18 March.

MAR/APR

WHAT'S ON



WORLD CUP PLAY-OFFS

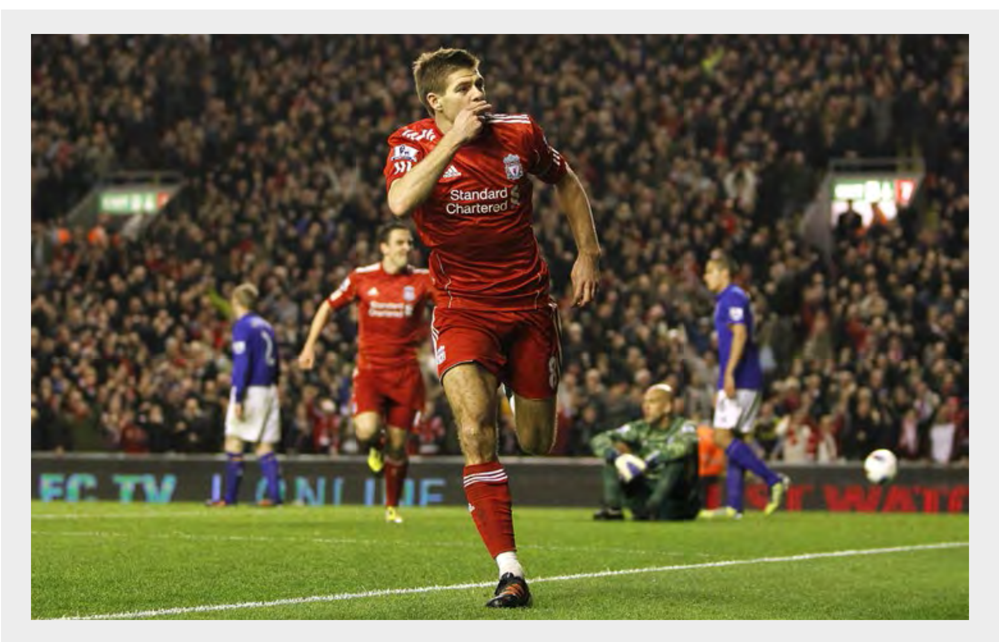
Mohamed Salah's Egypt will have an early chance to gain revenge over Sadio Mane and Senegal following the Africa Cup of Nations. The two nations go head-to-head again this month with a place at the FIFA World Cup finals in Qatar later this year at stake.

Egypt host the first leg of their play-off in Cairo on 25 March with the return in Diamniadio on 28 March.

Andy Robertson and Diogo Jota were also set to be involved in play-off action for their countries. Prior to recent developments, Scotland were scheduled to host Ukraine in their semi-final on 24 March but that game has now been postponed until June.

Portugal, meanwhile, play Turkey at Porto in their semi-final. If successful they will face either European champions Italy or North Macedonia, again at the Estadio do Dragao, in the final.

ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...



ANNIVERSARIES

96 years since Gordon Hodgson scored his first LFC goal on 10 March 1926

25 years since the second 4-3 win over Newcastle United on 10 March 1997

13 years since the Reds beat Real Madrid 4-0 in the Champions League on 10 March 2009

45 years since the legendary 3-1 win against St-Etienne on 16 March 1977

26 years since the first 4-3 win over Newcastle United on 3 April 1996

17 years since Liverpool defeated Juventus 2-1 in the Champions League at Anfield on 5 April 2005

And it's 10 years since Steven Gerrard's derby hat-trick at Anfield on 13 March 2012...

By the time this game came around there weren't many things Steven Gerrard had left to achieve in a Liverpool shirt. Scoring a hat-trick in a Merseyside derby was one of them.

The Reds captain scored in the first half and then twice more after the break in a 3-0 win – including one in the final minute – to tick that off his bucket-list.

His goals also earned Liverpool their biggest win against neighbours Everton in nine years on a night to remember at Anfield. It was the first hat-trick in a Merseyside derby since Ian Rush scored four in the Reds' 5-0 win at Goodison Park in 1982, and the first at Anfield since Fred Howe achieved the feat for Liverpool in 1935.

Gerrard produced finishes of delicate touch and power to secure the victory over David Moyes' men. As so often, he was the inspiration, in tandem with Luis Suarez, for a vibrant Liverpool performance.

The hosts made the breakthrough 11 minutes before the interval. Goalkeeper Tim Howard saved Martin Kelly's low shot but Gerrard collected the loose ball and then had the vision and touch to lift his shot over Everton's keeper and a collection of retreating defenders into the net.

Six minutes after the restart Suarez weaved his way into the area and found Gerrard who thumped a finish high past Howard in front of a delighted Kop.

He had the final word too late on with a simple finish with Suarez again the provider.

"It was a perfect day but the main thing was to get the three points against a very good Everton side who hadn't been beaten in ten games," said a delighted skipper afterwards.

BIRTHDAYS

Andy Robertson 28 on 11 March

Danny Murphy 45 on 18 March

Fernando Torres 38 on 20 March

Nat Phillips 25 on 21 March

John Toshack 73 on 22 March

Jerzy Dudek 49 on 23 March

Jasmine Matthews 29 on 24 March

Gordon Milne 85 on 29 March

Harvey Elliott 19 on 4 April

Robbie Fowler 47 on 9 April

Sadio Mane 30 on 10 April

Thiago Alcantara 31 on 11 April




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FIXTURES 2021/22

		SCORE	TV	SCORERS
AUGUST				
Sat 14	Norwich City (A, 5.30pm)	3-0	Sky	Jota, Firmino, Salah
Sat 21	**Burnley (H, 12.30pm)**	**2-0**	**BT**	**Jota, Mane**
Sat 28	**Chelsea (H, 5.30pm)**	**1-1**	**Sky**	**Salah (pen)**
SEPTEMBER				
Sun 12	Leeds United (A, 4.30pm)	3-0	Sky	Salah, Fabinho, Mane
Wed 15	**AC Milan (H, UCL Matchday One, 8pm)**	**3-2**	**BT**	**Tomori (og), Salah, Henderson**
Sat 18	**Crystal Palace (H, 3pm)**	**3-0**		**Mane, Salah, Keita**
Tue 21	Norwich City (A, Carabao Cup 3, 7.45pm)	3-0	Sky	Minamino 2, Origi
Sat 25	Brentford (A, 5.30pm)	3-3	Sky	Jota, Salah, Jones
Tue 28	Porto (A, UCL Matchday Two, 8pm)	5-1	BT	Salah 2, Mane, Firmino 2
OCTOBER				
Sun 3	**Manchester City (H, 4.30pm)**	**2-2**	**Sky**	**Mane, Salah**
Sat 16	Watford (A, 12.30pm)	5-0	BT	Firmino 3, Mane, Salah
Tue 19	Atletico Madrid (A, UCL Matchday Three, 8pm)	3-2	BT	Salah 2 (1 pen), Keita
Sun 24	Manchester United (A, 4.30pm)	5-0	Sky	Keita, Jota, Salah 3
Wed 27	Preston North End (A, Carabao Cup 4, 7.45pm)	2-0	Sky	Minamino, Origi
Sat 30	**Brighton & Hove Albion (H, 3pm)**	**2-2**		**Henderson, Mane**
NOVEMBER				
Wed 3	**Atletico Madrid (H, UCL Matchday Four, 8pm)**	**2-0**	**BT**	**Jota, Mane**
Sun 7	West Ham United (A, 4.30pm)	2-3	Sky	Alexander-Arnold, Origi
Sat 20	**Arsenal (H, 5.30pm)**	**4-0**	**Sky**	**Mane, Jota, Salah, Minamino**
Wed 24	**Porto (H, UCL Matchday Five, 8pm)**	**2-0**	**BT**	**Thiago, Salah**
Sat 27	**Southampton (H, 3pm)**	**4-0**		**Jota 2, Thiago, van Dijk**
DECEMBER				
Wed 1	Everton (A, 8.15pm)	4-1	AP	Henderson, Salah 2, Jota
Sat 4	Wolverhampton Wanderers (A, 3pm)	1-0		Origi
Tue 7	AC Milan (A, UCL Matchday Six, 8pm)	2-1	BT	Salah, Origi
Sat 11	**Aston Villa (H, 3pm)**	**1-0**		**Salah (pen)**
Thu 16	**Newcastle United (H, 8pm)**	**3-1**	**BT**	**Jota, Salah, Alexander-Arnold**
Sun 19	Tottenham Hotspur (A, 4.30pm)	2-2	Sky	Jota, Robertson
Wed 22	**Leicester City (H, Carabao Cup 5, 7.45pm)**	**3-3***		**Oxlade-Chamberlain, Jota, Minamino**
Tue 28	Leicester City (A, 8pm)	0-1	AP	
JANUARY				
Sun 2	Chelsea (A, 4.30pm)	2-2	Sky	Mane, Salah
Sun 9	**Shrewsbury Town (H, Emirates FA Cup 3, 2pm)**	**4-1**		**Gordon, Fabinho 2 (1 pen), Firmino**
Thu 13	**Arsenal (H, Carabao Cup S-F 1, 7.45pm)**	**0-0**	**Sky**	
Sun 16	**Brentford (H, 2pm)**	**3-0**		**Fabinho, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Minamino**
Thu 20	Arsenal (A, Carabao Cup S-F 2, 7.45pm)	2-0	Sky	Jota 2
Sun 23	Crystal Palace (A, 2pm)	3-1	Sky	van Dijk, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Fabinho (pen)
FEBRUARY				
Sun 6	**Cardiff City (H, Emirates FA Cup 4, 12pm)**	**3-1**	**ITV**	**Jota, Minamino, Elliott**
Thu 10	**Leicester City (H, 7.45pm)**	**2-0**	**BT**	**Jota 2**
Sun 13	Burnley (A, 2pm)	1-0		Fabinho
Wed 16	Inter Milan (A, UCL Ro16 1, 8pm)	2-0	BT	Firmino, Salah
Sat 19	**Norwich City (H, 3pm)**	**3-1**		**Mane, Salah, Diaz**
Wed 23	**Leeds United (H, 7.45pm)**	**6-0**		**Salah (2 pens), Mane 2, Matip, van Dijk**
Sun 27	Chelsea (N, Carabao Cup Final, 4.30pm)	0-0**	Sky	
MARCH				
Wed 2	**Norwich City (H, Emirates FA Cup 5, 8.15pm)**	**2-1**	**ITV**	**Minamino 2**
Sat 5	**West Ham United (H, 5.30pm)**	**1-0**	**Sky**	**Mane**
Tue 8	**Inter Milan (H, UCL Ro16 2, 8pm)**	**0-1**	**BT**	
Sat 12	Brighton & Hove Albion (A, 12.30pm)		BT	
Wed 16	Arsenal (A, 8.15pm)		Sky	
Sun 20	Nottingham Forest (A, FA Cup 6, 6pm)		ITV	
APRIL				
Sat 2	**Watford (H, 12.30pm)**		**BT**	
Tue 5/Wed 6	UCL Q-F 1			
Sun 10	Manchester City (A, 4.30pm)		Sky	
Tue 12/Wed 13	UCL Q-F 2			
Sat 16	Aston Villa (A)			
Sat 16	Emirates FA Cup S-F			
Sat 23	**Everton (H)**			
Tue 26/Wed 27	UCL S-F 1			
Sat 30	Newcastle United (A)			
MAY				
Tue 3/Wed 4	UCL S-F 2			
Sat 7	**Tottenham Hotspur (H)**			
Sat 14	Emirates FA Cup Final			
Sun 15	Southampton (A)			
Sun 22	**Wolverhampton Wanderers (H)**			
Sat 28	UCL Final			
TBC	**Manchester United (H)**		**Sky**	

All fixtures are subject to change.
*Liverpool won 5-4 on penalties (Milner, Firmino, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Keita, Jota)
**Liverpool won 11-10 on penalties (Milner, Fabinho, van Dijk, Alexander-Arnold, Salah, Jota, Origi, Robertson, Elliott, Konate, Kelleher)





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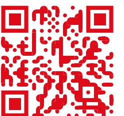
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NEIL MELLOR

Star players have been helped to recognise the importance of playing for Liverpool by having strong leaders in the dressing room such as Jordan Henderson and James Milner

It was always going to be difficult for whoever took over from Steven Gerrard as Liverpool captain. Stevie will go down as one of Liverpool's greatest players and he was also a Champions League-winning skipper, so he was a tough act for Jordan Henderson to follow.

In the early days Jordan had to live with comparisons to Gerrard, but then Jürgen Klopp came in and the focus turned onto the team rather than Henderson as an individual. It helped Hendo in his captaincy role.

Klopp is all about a collective effort. Each member of the team must contribute to earn collective success and with the Carabao Cup now added to the collection, Henderson has lifted five trophies as Liverpool captain.

He's also matured with experience and I think he's been a big influence on a lot of new players who have arrived at the football club. Players like Sadio Mane and Mo Salah have been helped to recognise the importance of playing for Liverpool by having strong leaders in the dressing room such as Henderson and James Milner. That can go a little bit unnoticed at times.

Some overseas players who arrive at Liverpool don't necessarily understand the culture of the club or the Premier League. As captain, Henderson will have had a massive impact on them. He sets standards to be followed.

Sami Hyypia and Stevie were the two captains I played under at Liverpool. They led by example, on and off the pitch, and everyone could see where they needed to be.

Gerrard was a captain who led by his actions and not necessarily his words. He made sure he was the best every day in training at Melwood and I'm sure Jordan, having played alongside Stevie himself, will have that sort of attitude as well. He takes responsibility, he never has disciplinary issues and the players can all look up to the example and standards he sets. That has a big influence.

He also still makes a huge contribution on the pitch. His workrate is fantastic, but so too is his ability to be able to adapt to a deeper role when Fabinho isn't playing, or operate in a freer midfield position.

One of Liverpool's biggest strengths is winning the ball back quickly and Henderson is really in tune with that. People will say 'does he get enough goals and assists?' He doesn't need to when the attacking players are scoring so many and at the time of writing he has six assists this season – three more than any other Liverpool midfielder.

Henderson remains an important part of this Liverpool team, but when you're trying to win three or four trophies it's all about the squad game and players recognising they won't play in every game.

James Milner doesn't play every week, but he is talked about as one of the best free transfers of all due to his contribution. He had options when he left Manchester City in 2015 but came to Liverpool even though we weren't the force we are today. He has been a vital signing.

Milner is a leader. He's a trusted individual who is versatile enough to play left-back, right-back, centre-mid – all over – and he never moans. He's solid, he's consistent and is influential on and off the pitch.

When the Carabao Cup final went to penalties I felt the first spot-kick was the one with the most pressure on it for Liverpool. You want to get off to a good start and Milner stepped up, sent the Chelsea keeper the wrong way and set the standard really well.

I fancied him to score – he's a dependable penalty-taker who has scored some very important penalties over the years – and at Wembley he added to his valuable contribution as a Liverpool player.

With three more trophies still to play for at the time of writing, experience is going to be important now. The lads will take confidence knowing they've won the Champions League and Premier League before, whereas if you're a club that hasn't quite got over the line – like Manchester City in the Champions League – there is always a doubt in your mind.

The big thing now is that two massive rivals, Liverpool and Manchester City, are competing for the three trophies at stake. We're dreaming of a quadruple, but they're dreaming of a treble and it is shaping up to be a massive battle for all three pieces of silverware.

I just hope that winning the Carabao Cup already will give Liverpool the confidence to win more and, let's be honest, if the Reds win either the Premier League or the Champions League we'd be delighted.

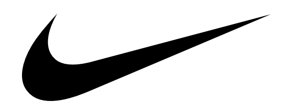
If Liverpool go on to win both it would be nothing short of incredible.



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